PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

Volume 9
Autumn 2018

PITTSBURGH
THEOLOGICAL
JOURNAL

AUTUMN 2018 • VOLUME 9

The *Pittsburgh Theological Journal* publishes research articles, dissertation abstracts, book reviews, sermons, and reflections on pastoral and educational ministry. It exists for the benefit of the extended community of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary to encourage academic and theological rigor and growth.

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ISSN 1949-9079

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader,

I sincerely hope you enjoy reading the 2018 Pittsburgh Theological Journal. Each year, the journal seeks to benefit the extended community of the seminary by encouraging academic rigor and growth. This year, specifically, each submission contains applicable pastoral insight for the reader alongside the academic depth.

It has been my honor to serve as the Editor-in-Chief for the past two years. This edition would not have been possible without the many hours worked by the diligent editorial staff. Thank you for your efforts.

Through many conversations with the PTS administration, I gratefully and humbly announce that the journal will no longer continue. I pray that the words published, pages read, and effort exhausted will bear fruit in the lives of those involved. May these works continue to help transform the minds of many individuals in the future by bringing insight, wisdom, and growth.

Blessings,
Jon Chillinsky
Editor-in-Chief

Letter from the President

Dear Reader,

Since the spring of 2009, the Pittsburgh Theological Journal has published essays, sermons, poetry, and meditations on ministry. On the occasion of this, the Journal's final issue, I am grateful to the advisors, editors, contributors, and readers past and present—and offer particular appreciation for the work of editor-in-chief, Jon Chillinsky.

The Pittsburgh Theological Journal has invited us as a community to reflect more deeply, think more critically, and know one another more profoundly. Though the Journal is being published for the last time, the invitations it has extended to us remain as significant as ever.

I invite you to read this final issue in that spirit of deep reflection, critical thinking, and profound knowing—and to consider how that spirit animates your life of faith as well.

David Esterline
President

PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

RESEARCH

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The *Missio Spiritus* in a Pluralistic World: A Pentecost Approach to Dialogue, Hospitality, and Sanctuary

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ABSTRACT

This two-part essay originated from my being invited to give the annual Don McClure Lectures at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 24-25 September 2017.

PART I: A PENTECOST APPROACH TO TRANSFORMATIONAL DIALOGUE

In this article, we will be navigating around four large topics: the Holy Spirit, mission, hospitality, and pluralism. Each one of those can take up two or more articles, so I am going to combine all four of them here. This first half, "A Pentecost approach to Transformational Dialogue," will be followed later with a joint look at the themes of

hospitality, and sanctuary in the Spirit. I have divided them in this way to focus a bit more on theological underpinnings in this first part, before we turn later to look at practice-oriented reflections more relevant for our contemporary time. However, as one trained in systematic theology, I am always theologizing, so theology will be prominent in both parts.

Although a theologian, I have been working also as a missiologist since joining Fuller Theological Seminary and teaching in the School of Intercultural Studies (where I also direct the PhD and ThM programs in intercultural studies, which used to be called PhD in missiology). So, I have been thinking quite a bit more about theology and mission, and of course, thinking about it in the multicultural Los Angeles area. Increasingly also, no matter where you live in North America, we are in times in which people are moving in all kinds of different directions and many major cities, Pittsburgh included, are increasingly diverse. These articles reflect some of my thoughts on these matters at the present moment.

MISSIOLOGY IN A PLURALISTIC WORLD: TYPES OF ENGAGEMENT

When we think about engaging with religious others, there are usually a few models that come to mind. One historic approach is what some call evangelism, and what others call interreligious apologetics. An, if not the, important goal in these modes of interacting with people of other faiths is to evangelize, to share the gospel or the good news of Christ, and to invite others to experience this evangel in their own lives. If such persons who are being evangelized put up any kind of reasoned argument in response, then it is appropriate or incumbent to shift to what is called interreligious apologetics,[1] meaning that we listen to the other's account and then attempt to respond to that account. Such could involve a version of the Christian faith that responds further to the other's perspective so that a kind of back-and-forth of rational defenses of and for faith ensues. One can imagine various scenarios for such exchanges, for instance, on the one hand, a more interpersonal and

1 A sophisticated but exemplary articulation of such is Paul J. Griffiths, *An Apology for Apologetics: A Study in the Logic of Interreligious Dialogue* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991).

impromptu interaction in an evangelistic context or, on the other hand, in more organized perhaps debate events where speakers come ready to present their views and engage those invited to represent other faiths.

A variation of the above that foregrounds more the conversational dimension and subordinates the apologetic thrust might be an interreligious dialogical forum where people of different faiths sit around and share perspectives on a common topic. In urban environments, for example, people of various religions might convene to address matters related to life together in the public sphere. Increasingly, these public contexts in North America bring together people of a variety of cultural and faith backgrounds. On some if not increasingly many of these occasions, then, faith perspectives come to the forum within the context of discussing this or that aspect of city, regional, state, national, or even international life.[2] More and more, people across faith traditions have found common cause to work for, i.e., the common good of our situation, our location, our region, and so on. For some, then, evangelism and interreligious apologetics are quite distinct and very different from interreligious dialogue, particularly conversations of the latter sort directed toward addressing social challenges.

While these activities are not necessarily opposed to one another, some will emphasize or more vigorously participate in one and neglect the other as if they were two quite distinctive modes of engaging with religious others. Let us not minimize their differences. There are many who are of the mind that yes, evangelism is a good thing and we ought to be focused on doing that. Others might be more inclined to have more open-ended discussions with people of various faiths, oriented to getting to know who they are instead, and consider that to be an appropriate and sufficient good. Should we be able and even encouraged to do both? What might it that look like for us to do both? And how might these approaches come together in the current cultural context?

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2 E.g., Michael Ipgrave, *Building a Better Bridge: Muslims, Christians, and the Common Good* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2008); and Francis Arinze, *Building Bridges: Interreligious Dialogue on the Path to World Peace* (New York: New City Press, 2004).

A PENTECOSTAL MISSIOLOGY?

I grew up in a Pentecostal home. My parents are Assemblies of God ministers and my father still preaches to this day. I was born in the country of Malaysia. At the age of ten, my parents moved our family to Northern California to work among Chinese-speaking immigrants. So, I went overnight from being a Pentecostal preacher's kid to being a Pentecostal missionary kid to the United States.

From this background of ongoing participation in the Pentecostal missionary movement, I have always grown up not really thinking specifically about what we might call missions. Yet we were surrounded by missionaries, some we sent and many others that would visit our church to raise support for their efforts. The Pentecostal movement has always been very committed to global missions.[3] Pentecostalism is one of the fastest growing forms of Christianity around the world.[4] Perhaps this is due in no small part to its very deep commitments to mission and evangelism. It has always been part of the Pentecostal DNA to go out and tell somebody "Jesus loves you."

Yet while Pentecostals have been very good at going, they have been less adept in developing a theology of mission, which is missiology. Missiology is the theological understanding of mission practices.You could say Pentecostals are first and foremost doers. They will go out and evangelize – they will engage in evangelism – but fewer of them have developed a theology of evangelism.

"Let's go out and save the world, do mission work, cross the oceans." The earliest modern Pentecostals in the 1906-1908 Azusa Street revival movement believed that they had been given the gift of tongues so that they could go and become missionaries to other people, without having to learn the languages.[5] So they set sail on their ships and after six months they landed in Asia and in other parts of the world, and they came off

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3 See Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2007).

4 Philip Jenkins, T*he Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity,* 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

5 See James R. Goff, Jr., *Fields White unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville and London: University of Arkansas Press, 1988), 72-75.

the boats speaking in other tongues – and then figured out that they had to learn the language. As doers concerned with world evangelization before the second coming of Christ, their experience of speaking in tongues motivated them to go. But then they did learn languages, and did establish churches with local pastors in all of the places where they landed. The point is that mission theology and theologizing has been a secondary enterprise at best for Pentecostals.

Yet I would like for us to ponder more intentionally about what a mission theology after Pentecost – the Day of Pentecost described in Acts 2, more specifically – might look like. From one perspective I am inviting consideration of this of course as a Pentecostal theologian and minister, some might even say a Pentecostal evangelist and missiologist. From another perspective, however, I urge us to reflect about a mission theology and a theology of evangelism after Pentecost, which is part of the story of all Christians not just those who belong to certain modern denominations. From this Pentecost point of view, I dare not ask everyone to sign up for membership in modern Pentecostal churches like the Assemblies of God (with whom I am a credentialed minister). On the other hand, what I present may lead us to ask, "why not join a movement that lives into the spirit of the Pentecost message?" Yet the important question before us is this: what does a Pentecost perspective look like when we think about mission in a pluralistic world?[6]

INTERFAITH(?) ENCOUNTERS AT PENTECOST!

A way forward into this question about mission, hospitality, and pluralism is to simply follow Jesus who poured out of his Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. I would like to suggest that the Pentecost narrative provides us with an implicit theology of the interfaith encounter. Do we see anything like the encounter between faiths or religions at Pentecost? Perhaps not in the sense that what we understand by *religion* is our own modern understanding of phenomena that went by other constructs in

6 See also my essay, "Many Tongues, Many Practices: Pentecost and Theology of Mission at 2010," in Ogbu U. Kalu, Edmund Kee-Fook Chia, and Peter Vethanayagamony, eds., *Mission after Christendom: Emergent Themes in Contemporary Mission* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 43-58, 160-63.

the ancient world.[7] Yet imaginatively and analogously, I would like us to consider the phrase that says,"there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem" (Acts 2:5).[8] As we go further into this passage in Acts chapter two, if we were to read it out loud fast enough, we would be speaking in tongues, in effect, with the Phrygians and the Pamphyllians and so forth: all these very strange names. But notice that there are Cretans, Arabs, and visitors from Rome (vv. 10-11), right there in the Pentecost narrative. These varieties of people named in Acts chapter two thus invite us to think about this Pentecost as a multicultural event constituted by people from around the Mediterranean world and speaking different languages.

I want to focus for a few moments on these three groups of people, just to help us to begin to think about the dynamics of intercultural, and then perhaps interreligious, encounters and discussions. While we may not know much about the Cretans the New Testament tells us something about them in one other place. In an almost throw away line in one of the pastoral letters, the author of the letter to Titus admonishes his Cretan readership about their opponent, of "one of them, their very own prophet, who said, 'Cretans are always liars, vicious brutes, lazy gluttons'" (Tit. 1:12). Writing to this Cretan context, he warns that one of their own Cretan philosophers says that all Cretans are liars. So, should we believe this Cretan philosopher? Is he telling the truth? This is paradoxical, is it not? If it is true, he cannot be telling the truth; but if it is not true, then he is telling the truth.

This is a fascinating glimpse into what we might call intercultural, or cross-cultural stereotyping, but in the first century Mediterranean context. Of course, as an Asian American, I have got my own stereotypes for all people, even as I have had to navigate life with stereotypes others

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7 E.g., Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

8 Unless otherwise noted, all scriptural quotations in both parts of this essay will be from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

have had of me and my people.[9] The human meeting of cultures, now and in the first century, generates these kinds of stereotypes, these kinds of "understandings" of others. Some of these are humorous, others of them more stigmatizing. Of course every humorous anecdote opens up a window into some phase, some aspect, some dynamic of these cross-cultural encounters. I wonder about these Arabs. I wonder about how history might have been different if, starting in the first century, the church had developed relationships between those from Jewish and Arabic backgrounds, and built and nurtured those relationships over the centuries. How might the last two-thousand years have been a bit different if Arabs, Cretans, and Jews, might have actually sustained and forged relationships across these linguistic and cultural lines.

I wonder about those from Rome – which was a location at the ends of the Earth from a first century Jerusalem-centered perspective – who were present. Recall that the thesis and outline of this Lukan sequel laid out at the beginning says: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (1:8), and that the book concludes in the 28th chapter with Paul arriving in Rome, at the ends of the earth. Yet in reality, those from the ends of the earth had already come to the center of the world in Acts 2. This is sort of Luke's version of reverse mission: that the ends of the earth had gathered there in Jerusalem at and from the beginning of the mission.[10] But Rome was not just at the ends of the earth, but was also the center of the imperial powers that ruled the known world in the first century. Galileans, Israelites, and Jews of the first century really did not want

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9 See Yong, "Race and Racialization in a Post-Racist Evangelicalism: A View from Asian America," in Anthony B. Bradley, ed., *Aliens in the Promised Land: Why Minority Leadership Is Overlooked in White Christian Churches and Institutions* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2013), 45-58 and 216-20.

10 For more on the contemporary concept of reverse mission, in which those from outside the European and North American West come to re-missionize these regions (like the Yong family from Malaysia coming to the U.S.A.), see Claudia Wahrisch-Oblau, *The Missionary Self-Perception of Pentecostal/Charismatic Church Leaders from the Global South in Europe: Bringing Back the Gospe*l, Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

Romans in their land. So we have not just cross-cultural, but cross-social and cross-political pressures within this first century event of Pentecost.

Part of what I see as Cretans, Arabs, Jews, Romans, and all of these other intermingling groups is that people and their languages are representative not just of cultures but of whole ways of looking at the world, whole ways of organizing life, and whole ways of thinking. Recall the spoken words at the Pentecost event: "in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power" (2:11). These linguistic particularies included cultural and, I would add, religious dimensions.[11] Cretan traditions interwove cultural, historical, political, social, and religious ways of being (similarly with Arabian, Roman, and the others). Of course we know the official religion of Rome: the worship of Caesar. So here was the encounter between the imperial Roman religion of Caesar worship and the Yawhistic Jewish religion which was Messianic and Jesus-centric, and that worshipped him as Lord.

We are thereby not surprised that Luke records: "at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each" (2:6), and "All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?'" (2:12).

Somehow, amidst Cretan linguistic, Arabic linguistic, Roman linguistic, Jewish linguistic, and all of these other sounds and discourses, these various languages declare God's deeds of power. Cretan religions were not directly declaring God's deeds of power (even if that is an intriguing thought). Yet this text and the way in which I am reading it might at least prompt us to ask that question. It is surely intriguing that they are still speaking about God's deed of power in these different languages. And we all continue to be amazed and perplexed, wondering what it may mean.

Conversations with people of other faiths might be an experienced somewhat like this Pentecost event, perhaps prompting similar wonderment. We might leave those discussions asking, how do I understand what I am hearing? How do I communicate what I am

11 See my essay, "A P(new)matological Paradigm for Christian Mission in a Religiously Plural World," *Missiology: An International Review* 33:2 (2005): 175-91.

trying to communicate within this exchange of cultures, religions, ideas, world views, commitments, and values? Can I be amazed and perplexed? Am I really comprehending?[12]

THE TRIUNE GOD, HOSPITALITY, AND MISSION

Pentecost, I suggest, invites us to think about what I call triune hospitality. We know that the incarnation represents what Karl Barth wrote about as the son of God journeying into a far country.[13] Incarnation represents God going on a journey. John's Prologue indicates that the word became flesh and tabernacled in strange parts in this other universe. God's missionary is the son of God. Pentecost, I suggest according to Luke's account of Peter's explanation, drawing from Joel in Acts 2, is about the Father of/and the Son sending the missionary Spirit. As Peter stood up to explain what the cacophonous Pentecost events meant, he quoted the older prophet: "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2:17; cf. Joel 2:28). If incarnation represents the Son of God's journeying into the far country, Pentecost represents the outpouring of that Spirit upon the inhabitants of that far country. Paul, of course, talks later in his letters about our bodies being temples of the Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19). The outpouring of the Spirit from Luke's perspective upon all flesh enables the possibility of flesh being, if you will, the organic temples of the Spirit of God. The Spirit comes upon and then takes up residence. I therefore suggest that incarnation and Pentecost open up to seeing God as triunely hospitable: triunely being host but also being guest, particularly going into the far country in the Son and then taking up residence in our lives by the Holy Spirit.[14]

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12 See Anthony Le Donne and Larry Behrendt, *Sacred Dissonance: The Blessing of Difference in Jewish-Christian Dialogue* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2017).

13 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics,* vol. IV, part 1, trans. G. W. Bromiley (London and New York: T and T Clark, 1956), §59.1, which section is titled, "The Way of the Son of God into the Far Country."

14 See Yong, "Guests, Hosts, and the Holy Ghost: Pneumatological Theology and Christian Practices in a World of Many Faiths," in David H. Jensen, ed., *Lord and Giver of Life: Perspectives on Constructive Pneumatology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 71-86.

So how do we understand and how can we read the rest of the book of Acts, from this perspective of God's triune hospitality, God's being host as Father, Son, and Spirit, but also God as being guest through the Son and the Spirit? One of the things I like to invite us to think about is what I call the mutuality of mission. The son goes into the far country and experiences life just like we do, taking on our ways sin excepted (see Heb. 2:14, 18, 4:15, 5:2, 7-8). As the Son enters deeply into our way of being, so the Spirit takes up inhabitation in our lives. How does hospitality and mission work in and through this kind of mutuality?

HOSPITALITY AND MUTUALITY: MISSIONAL TRANSFORMATION

I look to the Cornelius narrative to get a glimpse of the answer to that question.[15] We know that from Acts 10:1-2, Cornelius was a God-fearer and a very generous Centurion. He was quite pious, of wonderful reputation, and God answered his prayers by sending Peter his way. The Acts narrative declared him to be a righteous person, even before Peter arrived in his home (10:22). As such, Cornelius was one of those imperial masters who the Jews actually liked. If they had a chance to choose who not to deport from their region, Cornelius would probably have been one of those they would have kept.

The other major character in the Cornelius narrative is Peter. He had to go through a series of conversions. First, in order for him to even have been readied to have embarked upon his own missionary journey, God had to give Peter messages not just discursively but through visions. I wonder whether or not a regular discursive communique would just have gone over his head. God sometimes has to get our attention in our gut, if you will, and in this case, he touched Peter through three visions rather than through the sermon. Peter was not only hard-headed, but also hard-gutted. The point is that Peter goes through this transformation in order to be open to going to Cornelius' home. It may not have been possible for Peter to step across the doorway and enter into Cornelius' space, apart from those visions.

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15 See also Tony Richie, *Toward a Pentecostal Theology of Religions: Encountering Cornelius Today* (Cleveland, Tenn.: CPT Press, 2013).

Second, Peter comes to see, "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (10:34-35). On the one hand, Cornelius comes to know Jesus Christ in a way he did not before his encounter with Peter. From a Pentecostal perspective, Cornelius comes into the fullness of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by speaking in tongues (10:44-47). But, on the other hand, Peter is just as deeply transformed by his encounter with Cornelius, by what God does in his heart to prepare him to go to Cornelius, to meet Cornelius, to engage with Cornelius, to listen to Cornelius, and then to share with Cornelius. And in the course of all that, Peter experienced his own conversion of not just of his heart but also of his head. "I now *truly* understand," touches his heart, overcoming the barriers that hindered him from engaging with this pagan other, even though he was a God-fearer. Mission is mutual transformation. Hospitality is the matrix within which we meet and encounter others not on our terms but on the terms of the triune God, albeit in and through the spaces of others.

ENTERING THE PAGAN WORLD: ATTENTIVE TO ITS "WITNESSES"

We see a lot of this happening in the rest of the Book of Acts. If we are attentive to these dynamics, we shall see the apostolic missionaries entering into the pagan world, and heeding their various voices. Think, for instance, about Paul and Barnabas going in Acts 14 to Lystra and Derbe.

In this passage, as Luke records it, Paul and Barnabas draw strategically upon what some call natural theology arguments. Natural theology is about God's work in the creation, as a host providing rain and sunshine for God's creatures (14:15-17). In encountering and hearing their voices, the apostles engaged these Lystrans and Derbeites in language that they could understand.[16] We are also quite familiar with what happens in Acts 17 with regard to Paul at Mars Hill. Engaging with their philosophers, Paul draws upon some of those materials,

16 Marianne Fourner, *The Episode at Lystra: A Rhetorical and Semiotic Analysis of Acts 14:7-20a* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997).

ideas, texts, and poets in his interacting with this particular group at the Areopagus (or Mars Hill) in Athens (17:23-31).

I am reminded also that Paul spent two years having discussions with the Ephesians (19:8-10). So, this was not Paul doing the evangelistic crusade for three weeks and then leaving town. Instead, he remained there for two years and had ongoing discussions with those interested. Would not each of us have loved to have been in those discussions with Paul, giving and taking, back and forth in dialogue? And we know that Ephesus was a dominant pagan site. Artemis (also known as Diana), goddess of Ephesus, would have been present in the conversations in that context. What is interesting is in the latter part of Acts 19, as Paul and his hosts are being dragged out into the public, what is said about them is that they had not disparaged the local culture and its deities (see 19:37).

So, here is an interesting comment made about this dialogical interactive extended over two years of Paul's ministry. Embedded in this Ephesian context, his interactions with these Artemis-worshippers was not conducted in any derogatory manner. Paul found a way to engage with their cultural and religious realities without being offensive.

CONVERSATIONAL EVANGELISM

Here, then, we return finally to conjoin two themes that we treated distinctively above: evangelism and dialogue. What then is dialogical or conversational evangelism and how is it possible?[17] The Acts narrative, in particular the accounts of Paul's missionary journeys, are helpful in this regard, especially what happened in Thessalonica, Corinth, and Rome.

At Athens, Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three sabbath days discussed with his interlocutors from the scriptures (17:2). Some translations (including the NRSV) say, "argued with them," but the Greek word, *dielegato*, can just as well be translated "discuss" or "dialogue" (more literally). The same word is used not only with regard to Paul's engagement at Ephesus (19:8), but also, earlier, at Corinth: "Every sabbath he would argue [*dielegato*/dialogue] in the synagogue and would

17 For a more developed argument, see Yong, *The Dialogical Spirit: Christian Reason and Theological Method for the Third Millennium* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2014).

try to convince Jews and Greeks" (18:4). Paul's strategy, regularly, was to hold discussions, to engage in conversations in the synagogue, and to try to convince, even as he entertained the other perspective. Hence, again, there was this back-and-forth, give-and-take dialogue.[18]

At the end of the book, Luke describes the local Jewish leaders coming to meet Paul (28:17), and tells about his hosting them in great numbers from morning until evening, "testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets" (28:23). Paul convinced some by what he said, while others refused to believe. "He lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance" (28:30-31). In a sustained context of interaction and interchange (what I call conversational evangelism), Paul existed within a space in which he was both a host representative of the kingdom of God, the good news of Jesus Christ on the one hand, and also a prisoner and guest held by and thrust amidst others on the other hand.[19] What an incredible opportunity of being both host and guest simultaneously. Hard conversations unfold in these contexts.

MUTUAL TRANSFORMATION AT THE INTERFAITH MARGINS

To bring the first part to a conclusion, I want to think in terms of what I call a Pentecost theology or Pentecost missiology.[20] I hope it is now clear this does not mean Pentecost in the same way as what is represented by my church; rather, I mean Pentecost in relationship to how Luke describes what happened in the Book of Acts, and how Luke invites us then to embrace, inhabit, and perform such a vision. How does

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18 For more on these dialogical aspects of the Pauline mission enterprise, see Yong, *The Missiological Spirit: Christian Mission Theology for the Third Millennium Global Context* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2014), 128-31.

19 Also, Yong, "Christological Constants in Shifting Contexts: Jesus Christ, Prophetic Dialogue, and the MissioSpiritus in a Pluralistic World," in Stephen B. Bevans and Cathy Ross, eds., *Mission on the Road to Emmaus: Constants, Contexts, and Prophetic Dialogue* (London: SCM Press, and Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2015), 19-33.

20 For more on such a Pentecost approach, see Yong, *The Hermeneutical Spirit: Theological Interpretation and the Scriptural Imagination for the 21st Century* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2017), part I.

this Pentecost space, and orientation, invite us into a path of mutual hosting and guesting with people of other cultures, commitments, perspectives, and traditions?

Surely such an approach involves a certain level of risk and vulnerability which precedes transformation. Mutuality demands a certain willingness to attend to the strangeness, the otherness, of these witnesses. Pentecost calls attention to the otherness of the spoken language. Even if we had translators, translation only accounts for the first small steps of beginning to engage otherness. Just because we understand the words, does not mean we understand the reality pointed to behind the language.

The risk and the vulnerability of encounter is part of what it means for us to be willing to not just understand the meaning, but to be challenged by that meaning and to be interrogated by the message. That in part is what the risk of mission entatils: that we go into the far country, perhaps following in the steps of Jesus, hopefully filled with his Spirit, in order to meet Jesus afresh, anew, in the witness of those among whom we went to evangelize. Mission now involves becoming vulnerable to the claims of others upon us, of opening up to others as our hosts, and of being willing to adapt and adjust who we are now in this foreign and alien space.[21]

All the while, however, we have this Pentecost confidence, that we will receive the power of the Spirit to be witnesses. It is according to this Pentecost promise that we are able to be our authentic selves with all of the uniqueness of our languages, cultures, etc. The witness that each person bears is different even if all Jesus followers may desire to lift up his name. It is precisely Jesus' Spirit who enables us to bear particular and unique witness, in and through the flaws, frailty, and finitude that characterizes all creaturely narratives. Yet we do come, enabled by the Spirit somehow, to bear witness amidst this space of encountering others.

Such Pentecost witness occurs in and through deep and authentic exchange. The interwoven discursivity of multiple witnesses, in and through each other's languages and messages, pronounce the wonders

21 This line of thought develops Yong, "Reflecting and Confessing in the Spirit: Called to Transformational Theologizing," *International Review of Mission* 105:2 (2016): 169-83.

of God. We find our own voice perhaps afresh, even for the first time, in this new space. Effectively, every new encounter engenders a new testimony because we cannot give the same witness today that we gave in the another context. Different contexts, different spaces, different others, and different times requires consideration of such differences, that in turn generates a new witness, one that is still our own, by the power of the Spirit. And it is this authentic interchange, a Pentecost enabled mutuality, that transforms us even as we hope – by God's Spirit – that it also transforms those with whom we interact.

This transformation therefore allows us, maybe even calls us, pushes us, thrusts – all the while when we are saying: "Lord, I do not want to go to wherever it is you are calling me" – and carries us deep into that other territory, like the Son of God. As Jesus himself said: "Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want" (Matt. 26:39). Even if that is also our prayer, such praying allows that crossover into the space of others, and makes possible our return. But we do not return the same way we left. When we encounter others at this level, we return transformed. Our home spaces are no longer what they were before embarking on the mission.[22] Our home testimony is no longer what it was after this authentic exchange with others.

22 My own experience of crossover to and return from another faith, in this case Buddhist traditions, can be found in *Pneumatology and the Christian-Buddhist Dialogue: Does the Spirit Blow through the Middle Way?* Studies in Systematic Theology 11 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012).

PART II: HOSPITALITY AND SANCTUARY IN THE SPIRIT

While the first part addressed the topic of interculturality, or the meeting of cultures and religions from a Pentecost perspective, this segment brings together spirit and mission, hospitality and pluralism. Here we shift to discuss hospitality and sanctuary in the Spirit, with sanctuary here having political implications. Our goal, however, is to think about these themes within this rubric of the Spirit and mission, as that unfolds within a world of many cultures and of many faiths.

INTERFAITH RELATIONS: FROM BELIEFS TO PRACTICES

As we think about these four registers of interfaces – the Spirit, mission, hospitality, and sanctuary – note that we cannot easily separate our beliefs from our practices, or our beliefs about mission from our mission practices.[23] Our beliefs about hospitality (our theologies of hospitality) and our practices of hospitality are intertwined. Of course, any of us can easily talk about hospitality, but if we never get around to engaging in it, either as host or as guest, our words are merely abstract, merely speculative. I would like to invite us to also think about the work of the Spirit in a similar way. We can sometimes talk much more comfortably about the Spirit, but other times when the Spirit shows up and does what the Spirit does in our concrete lives, we get very nervous, and this includes Pentecostal believers as well. To be frank, all of us have good reasons to be nervous when the Spirit shows up because the Spirit often times does things that are different, new, and in the process pushes us towards participation in the mission of God. So, I want to focus for a few moments on moving back and forth from beliefs to practices, and to do so, we will briefly discuss interfaith dialogue, interreligious worship, and cross-religious solidarity.

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23 See Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor, Faith Meets Faith series* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), ch. 2, for discussion of this relationship.

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE/S: ITS TIMES, SPACES, PURPOSES

Interfaith dialogue is a form of practice.[24] Yes, we can theorize and talk about interfaith dialogue, but at the end of the day, talking about interfaith dialogue is less real than if we actually had conversations and relationships with our neighbors and coworkers that come from either some or no other faith tradition. In other words, interfaith dialogue is more meaningful as a practice and a way of life, less exciting as a kind of theory. And we can hopefully see that while a lot of different formal forums for these kinds of dialogues exist, sometimes the most meaningful ones are those that come out of the very real, historical circumstances of our lives. I remember, for instance, when my daughters were in second and third grade (in Minneapolis, Minnesota), and they brought home neighbors, classmates, who were from Buddhist families. In fact, my parents were Buddhists before they met Christ. But I really did not know much about that tradition because my parents had become Christians and ministers by the time I came around. Hence, I was raised basically only as a Christian. But then my daughters brought home Buddhists neighbors, during the period of my life after finishing graduate school when I had grappled with, and attempted to understand theologically, other religions.[25] This gave me opportunities to put my theological theories to real life tests. I was challenged to further embark on conversations with my own children and with their friends, as Christians, but yet at the same time, in open dialogue with these who were "others" to our faith.

Can we be open in such relational interactions? In reality, we can never know beforehand how the Holy Spirit might allow such conversation to unfold, whether it is at a work space, at school, or in a grocery line. These are the real moments of interrelational engagement

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24 E.g., S. Wesley Ariarajah, *Strangers or Co-Pilgrims? The Impact of Interfaith Dialogue on Christian Faith and Practice* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017).

25 My doctoral dissertation was published as, *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 20 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); the follow-up volume then was: *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003; reprint, Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2014).

in which we are often too busy to hear the Spirit nudge us or prompt conversation. If we were more open to those signals, we just never know what might happen next, or what might come out of those dialogues.

INTERFAITH WORSHIP: ITS OPPORTUNITIES AND ITS CHALLENGES

There's been quite a bit going on in some of the literature about Christianity encountering other religions with regard to the very challenging notion of interfaith worship.[26] For people of different faiths, what does it mean to worship together, pray together? Many of us have heard about interfaith prayer occasions, even if fewer have participated in such events or gatherings. There are important questions around what these kinds of occasions mean. How we can go about worshipping or praying with those of other faiths? How may we be able to participate in these activities? To what degree is our participation in such kinds of activities theologically viable or defensible? There are different opinions about these matters at the frontier of interfaith encounter and relationship.

At the end of the day, this is an arena of questions that we should take seriously as worshippers. But we also understand how people of other faiths would take their own worship experience with similar gravity and conviction. So, this is one of those issues that will continue to stretch us and provoke questions for us. From this perspective, perhaps we can more easily consider at present moving from the grocery line to the neighborhood to the cubicle in our office spaces with people of other faiths. But if we wished to then invite them to come into our worship sanctuaries, what happens if they also or in turn invite us to enter into their spaces and times of worship? That is something that we need to keep thinking about theologically. What does it mean for us to enter into the worship space and time of others, to be present amidst their worship practices? What if we went first to

26 E.g., Kwok Pui-Lan and Stephen Burns, eds., *Postcolonial Practice of Ministry: Leadership, Liturgy, and Interfaith Engagement* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2016).

their worship events: how might we then be invited to think about their visiting our worship spaces, times, and practices later? Interfaith beliefs are related to interfaith practices when considered from a worship perspective.

INTERFAITH SOLIDARITY: IN WORD AND IN DEED

And then, of course, there are many practices that people of various and many faiths can do together. For instance, in the last year (2017), there have been many national protests we have seen that have brought people of different faiths together.[27] I am not necessarily advocating for those specific causes, but protests are something that people can do together, whether we are in red or blue states.

These are many ways in which there will be more and more occasions for us as believers, as Christ's disciples, to extend, to join, to walk with, to walk alongside, and to accompany in many different directions people with a variety of faith backgrounds and levels. Living in a pluralistic society opens up opportunities for us to advocate with and for one another, regardless of our cultural or religious background, from those who are more or less nominal religiously to those who are quite serious perhaps like some of us. With more and more opportunities for such collaboration, whether or not we take them will depend in part on our own theological imagination, our own sense of witness, and our own sense of mission and how these convictions invite (or not) us to live out those elements in our time and in our culture.

HOSPITALITY AND SANCTUARY IN THE AGE OF TRUMP

From thinking about the relationship of our theologies of interfaith relation in connection with our interreligious practices, then, I want to consider issues of hospitality and sanctuary in our present time. "Sanctuary" refers more technically to the current national (in the United States of America) debate about whether cities and communities

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27 I am referring here to how the presidency of Donald J. Trump has generated multiple marches and protests across the nation; see also my essay, "American Political Theology in a Post-al Age: A Perpetual Foreigner and Pentecostal Stance," in Miguel A. De La Torre, ed., *Faith and Resistance in the Age of Trump* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2017), 107-14.

can provide refuge for individuals who are in the country without proper immigration documents. I wish to spring off this current phenomenon to think about our theology and practices of hospitality in a pluralistic world.

THE ISSUE OF (UNDOCUMENTED) MIGRATION: CURRENT (CONTESTED) POLITICAL REALITIES

As we have heard quite a bit about the Sanctuary movement, the church in North America is wrestling afresh with the theological issues related to immigration, both legal and not-so-legal (undocumented immigration).[28] In the Southern California context where I come from, that is one of the big questions that concerns how we engage with these issues.[29]

My wife is Mexican-American. So, I am a Malaysian-born, Asian-American, American-naturalized citizen, of Chinese descent, with a Mexican-American wife who is of Mexican decent. And our three children, while now already adults, are thoroughly "confused" about who they are and what they are (smiley face!). My wife is a fifth generation Texana, meaning she was born to parents who were born in and from Texas. The Garcia (my wife's family name) clan migrated up to eastern Washington, following the migrant trail up north to Wisconsin and then westward to the Pacific North West. My wife's parents settled in Moses Lake, Washington, which is in the Columbia Basin. In fact, my wife was born on a migrant trail in the middle of the state of Wisconsin during harvest season in July. During the years when we lived in Minneapolis (from 1999-2005), I had chance to drive with her to Wild Rose, Wisconsin, where she was born. The dilapidated and

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28 See Nell Becker Sweden, *Church on the Way: Hospitality and Migration* (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2015), for introduction to many of the issues.

29 See discussion of some of the especially existential issues related to undocumented immigration, particularly as that has impacted "dreamers" – mostly youth and young adults who were brought to the USA at a young age by parents without legal documentation and therefore have grown up in this country – see Norma Ramirez, Jennifer Hernandez, Jean Carlos Arce, and Lisseth Rojas-Flores, "DACA and the Health of 800,000+ Immigrant Youth: What Can the Church Do?" in Amos Yong, ed., "Health and Healing" issue in *Fuller: Story, Theology, Voice* (spring 2018): 42-49 [online version with a slightly different title available at https://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/daca-and-immigrant-youth/].

abandoned hospital building was still there, off the road from the main hospital; my mother-in-law as a migrant farmworker gave birth in a migrant hospital: that is where my wife came into the world in 1963. And my wife's family began to attend the Spanish Assemblies of God when she was a teenager. Hence, there are very interesting conversations going on in my wife's family with regard to our present political realities, not least the present discussions about Mexican immigration, especially of undocumented immigrants.[30] As the Hispanic Assemblies of God is close to the White Assemblies of God theologically, it is part of the wider pentecostal culture and milieu. So, if White Assemblies of God adherents are generally more "red" (Republican) politically in these matters related to immigration from south of the border, there is a much broader, even full (from "red" to "blue" and everywhere in between), spectrum of perspectives among Hispanic pentecostal Christians in general, and surely within the Latino Assemblies of God churches more specifically. Insofar as many in these churches are Mexicans (from Mexico) and Mexican-Americans, they sometimes feel a bit conflicted on these issues. The point is that this is a national conversation for many of us, and part of the discussion pertains to whether someone is documented or undocumented.

THE BIBLICAL "REFUGEE" AND ITS IMPORT FOR TODAY

But the other part of it is simply that for centuries people have been moving. In fact, that is how the biblical narrative unfolds.[31] Moving has been a part of the human story, the human journey. And part of the

30 The betwixt-and-between (the USA and Latin America more generally but Mexico especially) character of Latino/a pentecostal life is portrayed in the narratives of scholars like Gastón Espinosa, Latino Pentecostals in A*merica: Faith and Politics in Action* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 2014), and Daniel Ramírez, *Migrating Faith: Pentecostalism in the United States and Mexico in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

31 See M. Daniel Carroll R., C*hristians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2013), and Jean-Pierre Ruiz, *Readings from the Edges: The Bible and People on the Move* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2011).

question for us as a nation, and more importantly part of the question for us as the Church in and on mission, is how we think about the issue of migration in our particular time and context.

We can talk about sanctuary as a form of movement. I am less interested in the politics of sanctuary today, and more interested in the thinking theologically about the notion of sanctuary in relationship towards the theme of hospitality and mission. My intention is not to push any "red" or "blue" buttons, but I am wanting to push some theological, missiological, pneumatological, and Pentecost buttons with regard to thinking about these issues before us.

Throughout the scriptural traditions, there are all kinds of accommodations and all kinds of laws that were enacted. Whether or not Israel was really faithful to many of the laws is an open question. What is clear is that the cities of refuge are a part deep in the Old Testament tradition (see Numbers 35:6-14 and Joshua 20:1-2). Israel may not have kept up this tradition over time or centuries, and some scholars consider that perhaps part of the reason for her exile to Babylon was because the people of God had not kept that law, among many others. These questions remain open for us today.

HOSPITALITY AND THE RELIGIOUS OTHER

How then might we think about hospitality in light of global migration trends and intercultural and interreligious realities today? What are the limits to hospitality in our time? But does not hospitality involve not only being hosts to migrants but also being guests in the presence of others, including religious others in a pluralistic world?

THE RELIGIONS AND THE LIMITS OF HOSPITALITY

Certainly, the religions themselves, particularly the world religions, are quite developed, not only with regard to their practices but also in terms of their beliefs. I am hesitant to talk about "theologies" of the world religions, especially since Eastern faiths – some Chinese traditions, including Hindu traditions, and most Buddhist traditions – lack creator deities. In the case of Judaism and Islam, of course, we can denote their belief as *theologies* given their monotheistic commitments. But when speaking about the world faiths, we can safely say that all have at least philosophies of hospitality even as they have deeply embedded

religious practices related to being hospitable to guests. So, all of the world's religious traditions lift up the practice of hospitality, the practice of hosting guests, hosting strangers, and hosting travelers.[32]

There is a certain sense in which you could say that if we were ever going to get into a "religious war," let us attempt to outdo one another in providing hospitality. If we are ever going to get into a so-called "clash of civilizations,"[33] let us out-clash one another on being hospitable. The religious traditions of the world have resources that might actually stimulate, catalyze, and motivate that kind of out-doing one another on this particular point. Too bad we do not pull these texts on hospitality out first in our interactions with people of other faiths. When engaged in apologetics, might we argue or debate about which religious tradition urges the most radical form of hospitable practices?

One of the most important questions that is being raised in a variety of contexts in our current climate has to do with to what degree, as we embrace and welcome others into our space and particularly our national spaces, is hospitality to be practiced? What are the security issues involved, for instance, in relationship to engaging this question? And part of the answer involves: a home can sustain a hospitable environment only to the degree that the home is secure. From a practical perspective, I think there is much to be said about this response. We obviously are in the best position to be effective hosts if our homes and our affairs are in order. When my wife and I are in agreement and when our relationship is strong, we can welcome others into our space. But if we are arguing about this or that, that is not a good time to have guests. That is just part of the reality in which we understand what it means to be hospitable. The limits of our hospitality relate to the security of our spaces. So, when our "homes" are spaces of strength, to that same degree, they can be places of hospitality into

32 E.g., Fadi Daou and NaylaTabbara, *Divine Hospitality: A Christian-Muslim Conversation,* trans. Alan J. Amos (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2017).

33 From the famous book by Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

which we welcome others. Hence, part of my response to this question is that, yes, as long as we see ourselves primarily as hosts, we can and even ought to be concerned about protecting our homes. That in part is what hosts do.

FROM HOSTS TO GUESTS OF (RELIGIOUS) OTHERS

But what if we are not only hosts but also guests? In other words, what if we understood that our mission vocation involves our being hosts perhaps minimally, but mostly involves our being guests – guest of religious others and guest of cultural others? What happens when we adopt that guest mentality, the practical outgrowth of our guest theology? How does that now reshape the question of security, or re-frame the question of the limits of hospitality? But also, how does that now promote a different set of anxieties? The anxiety of guests is less concerned about securing the home base, and more about navigating the unknown spaces that surround us. Building on the first part of this essay, what happens if we understand that our primary missional calling is to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, who went out as a stranger to a far country?

What if our vocation involves being empowered by the Spirit who is poured out upon flesh – frail, finite, fallen, flawed flesh – like ours? And how does the Spirit inhabiting that flesh shape our perspective about hospitality?[34] And if that is the missional call, then we might recognized that the limits pertain to our capacity to be willing guests on our own strength. We become more aware that our incapabilities, fears, anxieties, and worries are our own; they are not from God. Rather, God calls us into this other and different space.

HOSPITALITY AND SANCTUARY AFTER PENTECOST

Let us look at a few texts in the book of Acts like I invited earlier from this prospective of thinking about sanctuary, the religious encounter, hospitality, and mission from this Pentecost perspective. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the first challenge we encounter is in Acts chapter 2.

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34 See my essay, "The Spirit of Hospitality: Pentecostal Perspectives toward a Performative Theology of the Interreligious Encounter," *Missiology: An International* Review 35:1 (2007): 55-73.

We would surely rather see that the disciples received power after the Spirit came upon them and they went out from Jerusalem to Judea, etc., that they just went forth in triumphant courageousness. Instead, all who believed were together and had all things in common and the first messianic followers sold their possessions and goods and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need (Acts 2:42-47). That is not too exciting, even as we remember the story. Peter is preaching and in response to the question of what the Pentecost event and manifestations were about, he looks to the prophet Joel (Acts 2:17-21). And his listeners were pricked to their hearts, and asked, "what should we do?"; to which he replied: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" – upon which three thousand were baptized in that day (Acts 2:37-38, 41). All of a sudden, then (I would suggest), Jerusalem turned into a sanctuary movement. And of course, his first century sanctuary movement kept growing and expanding. By the time we get to Acts 4 -5 there were five-thousand, including those added that come from the Judean countryside (Acts 4:4, 5:16a).[35]

Rereading the book of Acts from our present highly politicized context, recall also that Peter and John had healed a lame man at the Gate Beautiful and the authorities threw them in jail overnight (Acts 3-4).[36] They came out the next day and stood before their accusers and asked the gathered crowd to judge whether it was right in God's sight to listen to their captors rather than to God. Later in Acts 4, the Psalmist is quoted during the prayer and praise meeting: "Why did the Gentiles rage and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand and the rulers have gathered together against the Lord and against his Messiah" (Acts 4:25-26; cf. Ps. 2:1-2). Peter is situating this sanctuary movement, I am suggesting, within the public space of first

35 For more on the liberative and socio-communally transformative effects of the Pentecost event, see my essay, "Jubilee, Pentecost, and Liberation: The Preferential Option of the Poor on the Apostolic Way," in Elise Mae Cannon and Andrea Smith, eds., *Evangelical Theologies of Liberation* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2019), forthcoming.

36 Elsewhere I have explicated the political dimension of this healing episode: *Who is the Holy Spirit? A Walk with the Apostles* (Brewster, Mass.: Paraclete Press, 2011), ch. 8.

century Jerusalem, an outpost of imperial Rome. This was a city under Roman governance, but with local religious and political leadership. In this context, note that there were already concerns regarding alleged "sanctuary" movements, especially given references to others that had led rebellions and revolts (see Acts 5:36-37).[37]

Observe then that the movement of the Spirit already has created a kind of first century sanctuary, what we might call a "Pentecost sanctuary" in which people shared with one another, cared for one another, and welcomed each other from the surrounding communities. Why were these Judeans leaving the countryside and joining the Messianic movement? Was it because they could not pay their taxes? Was it because they were not doing very well at the hands of imperial Rome? Among this apostolic community there are two or three thousand witnesses – narratives or testimonies – about how these who came from around the Mediterranean and the Judean rural areas found themselves now in this new "safe" space and this new "sanctuary" time.

APOSTOLIC SANCTUARIES: PAUL (IN LUKAN PERSPECTIVE)

When we look at the life of St. Paul, we also see other apostolic and sanctuary shades. In Acts 9, the disciples took him by night, led him down through an opening in the wall, and lowered him in a basket. This is what we might call solitary sanctuary. Saul's salvation is secured through this sanctuary, if you will, a first century elevator version. We might also say that this was a rope-mediated sanctuary, albeit empowered by the Spirit's overarching work (cf. Acts 1:8).[38]

Then in Acts 16 when Paul and Silas are in Philippi, the authorities threw them in jail. They were singing at midnight and an earthquake happens, their shackles fall off, and we thank God for saving them from sanctuary imprisonment. But the jailer is worried stiff because his head

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37 For more on the broader political character of the Lukan narrative, including in the Book of Acts, see Yong, *In the Days of Caesar: Pentecostalism and Political Theology* – The Cadbury Lectures 2009, Sacra Doctrina: Christian Theology for a Postmodern Age series (Grand Rapids and Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), ch. 3.2.

38 Elsewhere I have provided a pneumatological reading of parts of Paul's letters; see Yong, *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2012), ch. 7.

was on the line if the prisoners escaped. But Paul and Silas stick around, share the Gospel with him, and baptize him and his family. When the jailer the next day reports to Paul that the magistrate has sent word to let them go, Paul replies, "They have beaten us in public, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they going to discharge us in secret? Certainly not! Let them come and take us out themselves" (Acts 16:37). The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they detained Roman citizens. So, the magistrates came and apologized to Paul and Silas, and they took them out and asked them to leave the city. Having left the prison, Paul and Silas went on to Lidia's house and encouraged the brothers and sisters there before departing.

Interestingly, then, we have the situation in which a Roman jailer first has Paul and Silas as his responsibility, but next, he is in the position of now being a mediator between the magistrates and Paul.The jailer now mediates a political relationship between a so-called prisoner and the government. This invites consideration of sanctuary as multiple shades of the political situations and contexts within which we find ourselves, sometimes is not quite in, sometimes as mediators, sometimes on the outside, but yet, in relationship. Here I think again of my wife's extended family, with many members both here in the USA and in Mexico, mostly citizens of this country but a few not documented. My wife's extended family thus is situated differently within and outside of "sanctuary." Some are not legitimately in, but yet they are also out in other respects, perhaps like the jailer, in-between, mediating.

Acts 23 also invites us to think about another form of apostolic sanctuary. In this story, the tribune who had oversight of Paul's custody found out about the Jewish plan to ambush Paul and summoned two centurions and said, "Get ready to leave by nine o'clock tonight for Caesarea with two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen. Also provide mounts for Paul to ride, and take him safely to Felix the governor" (Acts 23:23-24). Although not quite the sanctuary that we have been talking about, this is nevertheless a form of sanctuary, a government-sponsored sanctuary, effectively, provided for Paul against Paul's opponents. So, think about why and how people might oppose sanctuary variously. Good reasons and arguments could be offered for

opposing some of these sanctuary activities or movements. There was opposition to Paul, but the Lukan text shows that he found government sanctuary from those who are opposed to his work, ministry, and vocation.

The final chapter in the Book of Acts also invites us to think about sanctuary among the barbarians. The Greek *barbaroi* in Acts 28, verses 1 and 2 is domesticated when translated as "natives."[39] Missiologists might consider these as indigenous islanders.We are discussing, of course, the Maltese islanders, the indigenous natives who greeted Paul and his shipwrecked companions when they washed upon their shores. Well, we can handle a little bit of hospitality from the natives and especially if shipwrecked, we would welcome hospitality from these indigenous folks, but from barbarians? We might not be so sure we are safe among such. Certainly, Paul and his companions found themselves receiving hospitality from these barbarians, but not out of choice. That is exactly what happened with this unplanned visit caused by a storm that blew their ship off course. Providentially they came up on the island of Malta and the chief barbarian received and entertained them hospitably for three days: sanctuary among the barbarians, indeed, the barbarians who we might otherwise believe to be dangerous at worst, or who deserve to be recipients of our civilization at best. More to the point: any and all barbarians are in need of our good news. But instead, all Luke tells us about the barbarians is how incredibly hospitable they were. They bestowed many honors on Paul and his friends and when they were about to set sail, the barbarians loaded up the replacement ship with all the needed provisions. Although what they initially brought had been thrown overboard during the storm, such was replenished by the barbarians!

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39 For further discussion of Acts 28, see also Yong, "Conclusion – From Demonization to Kin-domization: The Witness of the Spirit and the Renewal of Missionsin a Pluralistic World," in Amos Yong and Clifton Clarke, eds., *Global Renewal, Religious Pluralism, and the Great Commission: Toward a Renewal Theology of Mission and Interreligious Encounter*, Asbury Theological Seminary Series in World Christian Revitalization Movements in Pentecostal/Charismatic Studies 4 (Lexington, Ky.: Emeth Press, 2011), 157-74, esp. 161-62.

Luke's account of the interaction with the Maltese islanders does not record any of Paul's active or verbal evangelism.[40] The text tells us that Paul did say something, but only that he prayed for the leader of the island who was sick, and he got better. But Acts 28 tells us nothing about evangelism, church planting, or the establishment of a seminary. Rather, this chapter informs us about sanctuary amidst, from, and through the barbarians.These barbarians who were the other culturally and religiously invites reconception of hospitality and sanctuary in our pluralistic world, which is Acts 29, the next and unfinished chapter extending from the Acts narrative.[41] We live in this 29th chapter, and from that perspective may need to imagine reception of hospitality from those others most different from and perceived to be untrustworthy to us.

HOSPITALITY AND SANCTUARY: THE CENTER AND THE MARGINS

As we think about hospitality and sanctuary, and about mission, evangelism, and witness in the Acts narrative, note that the apostles, the Jesus followers, were aliens and strangers amidst the *Pax Romana*, what historians call the peace of Rome. Yet they were also those who were on the margins of this imperial Roman society. Comparatively, then, one of the big challenges Christian believers face in the twenty-first century North American context is that they do not live on the margins of our society in the same way as the first century messianic disciples did. Instead, contemporary North American Christians are much closer to the center of their society. We might even acknowledge that we are beneficiaries of the American empire, and if that is true, then we may be more concerned about protecting our vested interests than in

40 For more on the backdrop of Paul's missiology, drawn from the Pauline letters, see Yong, *Mission after Pentecost: The Bible, the Spirit, and the Missio Dei,* Mission in Global Community (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), ch. 6.

41 Cf. Pamela M. S. Holmes, "Acts 29 and Authority: Towards a Pentecostal Feminist Hermeneutic of Liberation," in Michael Wilkinson and Steven M. Studebaker, eds., *A Liberating Spirit: Pentecostals and Social Action in North America* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010), 185– 209.

living out the gospel message.[42] Such would be a tremendously seductive location to inhabit for those attempting to live out the book of Acts in this time and space. It would not be easy to trek in the footsteps of Jesus followers who were not wedded to empire. Even if they did exercise their citizenship and the rights and privileges thereof, as Paul did in the Acts narrative, they did so not attempting to protect their economic, national, or transnational interests.

As a naturalized American citizen, I have learned from our history books that this country was founded upon a separation of church and state. Arguably, from a historical perspective, we need to reset our mentality so we can re-envision what it means to be a people that are aliens and strangers who are in that sense always looking to another home. Not that this is not my country in some significant respects; it is. Yet consider the pilgrims who attempted to refashion and reconfigure their religious lives in relationship to the state when they came to the New World.

How then might we exercise our national citizenship but yet also live faithfully in light of the gospel?[43] Put alternatively, how do we embrace the opportunities before us as those who are beneficiaries in some respects of a Christian America on the one hand, but not put our faith in Christian America on the other hand? How might we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and receive his call to bear his witness and his name to the world around us? As we have reread the Acts of the Apostles, I have attempted to reimagine what mission after Pentecost looks like, and tried to discern how those apostles who were not subservient to their nation bore witness in obedience to the Spirit of Jesus.

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42 I unpack this idea vis-à-vis ethnic minorities in a white majority American imperial context in my essay, "Mission after Colonialism and Whiteness: The Pentecost Witness of the 'Perpetual Foreigner' for the Third Millennium," in Love L. Sechrest, Johnny Ramírez-Johnson, and Amos Yong, eds., *Can "White" People Be Saved? Triangulating Race, Theology, and Mission* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2018), 301-17.

43 A helpful interlocutor here is Steven M. Studebaker, *A Pentecostal Political Theology for American Renewal: Spirit of the Kingdoms, Citizens of the Cities*, CHARIS: Christianity and Renewal – Interdisciplinary Studies (Palgrave Macmillan/Springer, 2016).

TOWARD AN EVANGELICAL THEO-PRAXIS OF HOSPITALITY AND SANCTUARY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

In closing, then, we return to the beginning of the books of Acts, when upon concluding a forty-day seminar with Jesus, the disciples asked him this question: "Lord, is it now time when you will restore the Kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).That is an intriguing political question, especially after having a full semester (analogously) of seminary level course of study with a master professor. Jesus' response first alleviated their anxieties about this political renewal and then, more substantively, promised the Pentecost gift of the Spirit. Yet, the call not to worry about the restoration of Israel did not necessarily mean there was not going to be social, economic, and political consequences to and implications for messianic discipleship.

We have already seen (above and in Acts 2) that there were certainly economic entailments to the coming of the Spirit. There were also assuredly political consequences in terms of how the disciples lived out their citizenship across the Roman empire. And we see that much of the New Testament grapples with what it means to be Jewish in Gentile territory that reaches to and includes the ends of the earth. How do we understand that reality? We take for granted our Gentile identity, but in the first century that was a deeply political question. And the answer was (to paraphrase), "and you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be my witnesses in the polis, amid the public square, in and from Jerusalem and beyond." In the end, then, Jesus' promise of the Spirit was not just a spiritual response but also a political empowerment.[44]

This final section title thus begins with, *toward*. *Toward* signals that we are not very close, given how we have lived, how we have voted, and how we have argued amongst ourselves, etc. *Toward* is thereby an invitation to continue grappling with and struggling about what it means

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44 Yong, "Renewing the Public Square: Pentecostalism and Mission in Political Perspective," in Joshua Kalapati, Daniel Jeyaraj, and Gabriel Merigala, eds., B*reaking Barriers and Building Bridges: An Appraisal of the Missionary Legacy in India* – The Dharma Deepika 20th Anniversary Special Commemorative Volume Released as a Festschrift in Honour of Roger and June Hedlund (Chennai: Mylapore Institute for Indigenous Studies and Inter Church Service Association, 2016), 241-50.

to be evangelical, meaning to embody good news in our beliefs and practices, in particular vis-à-vis hospitality and sanctuary in so-called Christian America. And I desire to be not just an evangelical, but to be a Christian. I wish we could reimagine, not just in a political sense, but in a deeply missional sense, our theology and the practice of hospitality and sanctuary. And perhaps along the way hospitality and sanctuary will develop interfaith dimensions as we share with integrity our own story and listen to and receive the stories of others.[45]

45 Thanks to Jon Chillinsky and the PTJ staff for help with transcribing my lectures, and to my graduate assistants, Hoon Jung for helping variously with transitioning the transcriptions to readable articles, and Nok Kam, for proofreading the essays. Any errors of fact or interpretation remain my sole responsibility.

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Beloved Community and Justice:
The Holiness of God as the Foundation for Social Justice

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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ABSTRACT

The call for justice dominates conversational points throughout the media, town-hall meetings, demonstrations, and Sunday sermons. However, one aspect of justice is rarely considered. This research essay ventures to examine the grounding of justice as it relates to God and human relations. I submit that justice – according to a biblical understanding of the God of justice – and its corollaries for social justice, is rooted in the holiness of God. If justice is to be genuinely lived and exercised in urban contexts of Beloved Community, it is, indispensable, therefore, to examine this topic and its practicality in our modern time.

INTRODUCTION

> Beloved Community is a global vision, in which all people can share in the wealth of the earth. In the Beloved Community, poverty, hunger and homelessness will not be tolerated because international standards of human decency will not allow it. Racism and all forms of discrimination, bigotry and prejudice will be replaced by an all-inclusive spirit of sisterhood and brotherhood. In the Beloved Community, international disputes will be resolved by peaceful conflict-resolution and reconciliation of adversaries, instead of military power. Love and trust will triumph over fear and hatred. Peace with justice will prevail over war and military conflict.[1]

וַיִּגְבַּ֥ה יְהוָ֖ה צְבָא֑וֹת בַּמִּשְׁפָּ֔ט וְהָאֵ֥ל הַקָּד֖וֹשׁ נִקְדַּ֥שׁ בִּצְדָקָֽה׃

> But Yahweh of hosts is exalted in justice; and the holy God shows himself holy in righteousness. Isaiah 5.16

Martin Luther King's vision for Beloved Community stands out as the most captivating desire for human harmony, transcending the lines of racial, ethnic, cultural, gender, and social stratification. It aims to acknowledge and respect the *imago Dei*, rather than objectify the human individual. It shouts for the display of justice at, both, the local and global landscapes. The call for justice i.e., social justice, dominates conversational points throughout the media, town-hall meetings, demonstrations, and Sunday sermons. There remains, however, an affiliated point of justice rarely considered. Throughout the contents of this essay, I look at the grounding of justice as it relates to God and human relations. I submit that justice – according to a biblical understanding of the God of justice – and its corollaries for social justice, is rooted in the holiness (*qodesh*) of God. If justice is to be genuinely lived and exercised in urban contexts of Beloved Community, it is, indispensable, therefore, to examine the relationship between the holiness of God and justice. A non-exhaustive consideration of passages from the Hebrew Bible ("HB" hereafter) are examined as well as explore how these passages

1 The King Center, "The Beloved Community," http://www.thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy, (accessed 30 January 2017).

were lived out in Jesus' life as recorded in the Gospels. The present cry for economic, racial, and social justice in our cities warrants a serious look at the interconnection between God's holiness and God's justice; how these compare with human justice is vital to the comprehension of human existence. Finally, a vision of a city as Beloved Community will be offered.

JUSTICE IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

To speak of justice is to speak of a concept that is as old as human history itself. The belief that human beings are created beings necessitates the acceptance of a moral Creator. That this Creator is moral in nature implies that all that is good and moral originates in this Creator. The affirmation that humanity's creation is in the *imago Dei*[2] correlates human beings and human existence to be a reflection of the Creator. To affirm human existence as an evolutionary by-product, on the other hand, nullifies the potential of justice, making it an amorally generated relativistic idea formulated, in and through, opinionated understandings of good, evil, right, and wrong within human relations and interaction.

The world of the ancient Near East (ANE) believed in a creator deity as member within a pantheon of deities; that is, there was no supreme being. Within this plethora, each deity held a specific responsibility, representing such matters as order, justice, love, and truth, to name but a few. Among ANE inhabitants, according to Philip J. Nel, "a normative principle of justice was maintained as part and parcel of the created universe. The human life-world and the order of nature were seen as inextricably entwined."[3] It is not surprising, therefore, how ancient civilizations understood justice to be a concomitant attribute of a deity within a pantheon of deities; a pantheon where members had origins and, in most instances, were familial in nature. According to their understanding of creation, ancient civilizations held views on social and economic justice as a means that would "facilitate the service of the

2 Genesis 1.26-27

3 Philip J. Nel, "Social Justice as Religious Responsibility in Near Eastern Religions: Historic Ideal and Ideological Illusion," *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (2000): 143-153.

community to the divine world."[4] Nel observes that, "The principle of justice was . . . not so much regarded as a system of moral order, but rather the assumption of an existing/created autonomous design/order which should be upheld and adhered to in all sectors of society."[5] The Sumerians, and the Egyptians, serve as examples.

As one of the oldest known societies in Mesopotamia, Sumerians were a people that "cherished goodness and truth, law and order, justice and freedom, righteousness and straightforwardness, mercy and compassion. And they abhorred evil and falsehood, lawlessness and disorder, injustice and oppression, sinfulness and perversity, cruelty and pitilessness."[6] They perceived justice to be "the order of creation" as it related to "creation activities" of Utu.[7] For Sumerians, and known as Šamaš throughout other sectors of the ancient Mesopotamian world, Utu – the sun god of justice and righteousness – "shines brightest when the orphan and the widow are protected and when relations between the powerful and humble remain fair."[8] An ancient Sumerian hymn reads, in part:

> Utu, you are the god of justice,
> Utu, (you are) the shepherd, the father of the "dark headed" people.
> Utu, (you are) the principal judge of the land (of Sumer).
> Utu, to give judgement is in your power (right).
> Utu, to give decisions is in your power (right).
> Utu, justice is in your power (right).
> Utu, to lead in truthfulness and justice is in your power.

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4 Enrique Nardoni, *Los que buscan la justicia: Un estudio de la justicia en el mundo biblico* (Navarra: Editorial Verbo Divino, 1997), 18. The English translation of this title is Rise Up, O Judge: A Study of Justice in the Biblical World. Translated by Sean Charles Martin (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 4. References to Nardoni's work will come from the English translation, unless noted otherwise.

5 Nel, Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages, Vol. 26, No. 2 (2000): 144.

6 Samuel Noah Kramer, History Begins at Sumer: Thirty-Nine Firsts in Recorded History, Third Edition (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), 101-102. Sumerians came from Sumer, an area in the southern area of modern day Iraq.

7 Nel, *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (2000): 145.

8 Nardoni, *Rise Up, O Judge*, 5. See also Moshe Weinfeld, Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, 1995, 2000), 51-52.

. . . . .
Utu, the destitute girl, the forsaken woman (?) are in your power (care).
Utu, to provide justice to the widow is in your power.
Utu, if you do not come out (var., without you), no judgement is given, no decision is made.[9]

The unwavering devotion and loyalty of Urukagina, the first Sumerian social reformer in recorded history,[10] to Ningirsu - the Sumerian protective god of the city-state of Lagash - for example, helped him "create and reform legal structures so that citizens can easily fulfill their purpose in life, which was to serve the divine world."[11] Finally, another Sumerian hymnal inscription offering worship to Nanshe – the goddess of moral conduct – describes her as the one:

Who knows the orphan, who knows the widow,
Knows the oppression of man over man, the orphan's mother,
Nashi, who cares for the widow,
Who seeks out (?) justice (?) for the poorest (?),
The queen brings the refugee to her lap,
Finds shelter for the weak. . .
To comfort the orphan, to make disappear the widow,
To set up a place of destruction for the mighty,
To turn over (?) the mighty to the weak. . .
Nanshe searches the heart of the people.[12]

Ancient Egyptian understanding of justice (Ma'at – pronounced may-et) centered in the "anthropomorphic . . . winged woman . . . with an ostrich feather on her head" who represented and protected truth, justice, righteousness, balance and morality.[13] For Egyptians, the exemplification of justice was lived in the actions of the everyday lives

9 Nardoni, *Rise Up, O Judge*, 15.

10 Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer*, 366.

11 Nardoni, *Rise Up, O Judge*, 3-4; Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer*, 45.

12 Nardoni, *Rise Up, O Judge*, 16.

13 Maulana Karenga, *Maat, the Moral Ideal in Ancient Egypt: A Study in Classical African Ethics* (New York/London: Routledge, 2004), 6; Joshua J. Mark, "Ma'at," Ancient History Encyclopedia, last modified September 15, 2016, http://www.ancient.eu/Ma%27at/; Nardoni, Rise Up, O Judge, 22.

of the populace, but especially expected to be on display through the dictates of edicts and administrative actions of the king (i.e., pharaoh). Egyptians held the conviction that "pharaoh possessed the power of maat."[14] Due to the divine status people attributed to a pharaoh, as representative of Horus, justice was considered to originate from the "divine order of righteousness" and, as such, "all royal actions were in principle religious."[15] It is noteworthy to mention pharaoh's exercise of maat as an offering to the gods during the period of the Old Kingdom (2700 – 2130 BCE); justice, therefore, was not contingent upon the welfare of the lower-stratum of the populace.[16] It was the responsibility of the people (i.e., those within the same social class), however, to care for one another; a social class that included artisans, peasants, slaves, widows, and orphans, among others. Among the populace itself, helping the needy was considered "a work of maat."[17]

Ancient Sumerians, Egyptians, and the ANE world did not see justice as the conceptualization of an abstract idea but considered it as profoundly rooted in the deities; in a divine order. Justice was viewed as being "hardwired into the structure of a cosmos which the gods inhabit but did not create."[18] The implication, therefore, meant that rulers and their loyal people would be no less than the deities in every aspect of life – politically, religiously, interpersonally, and personally.[19]

JUSTICE IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

In contrast to the mindset and worldview of its ANE neighbors, the Hebrew nation of Israel saw justice, mercy, compassion, sovereignty, truth, and righteousness solely centered and originating in one deity – Yahweh. Unlike the pantheon of deities, the Hebrew God has no

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14 Nardoni, *Rise Up, O Judge*, 22.

15 Nel, *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (2000): 144.

16 Nardoni, *Rise Up, O Judge*, 23.

17 Nardoni, *Rise Up, O Judge*, 27.

18 Timothy D. Lyyton, "Shall Not the Judge of the Earth Deal Justly: Accountability, Compassion, and Judicial Authority in the Biblical Story of Sodom and Gomorrah," *Journal of Law and Religion*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2002-2003): 31-55.

19 See Brian R. Doak, "The Origins of Social Justice in the Ancient Mesopotamian Religious Traditions," Faculty Publications – College of Christian Studies, Paper 185 (2006): 1-12.

beginning, is not the offspring of other deities, and has no familial offspring. The aseity of this God affirms self-existence and sustenance, in need of no one. Thus, Yahweh is wholly other, as clearly expressed to Moses: ". . . there is none like me in all the earth."[20]

For the Hebrews, Yahweh alone is the source of justice.[21] The writers of the Hebrew Bible convey this through passages capturing, attributing, and attesting to this belief, making its first appearance in the theophanic account of Genesis 18. Statements, such as the following, give a glimpse of the affirmative testimony concerning the God of justice:

> The Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are **justice.** A **God of** faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he.[22]

> Now then, let the fear **of** the Lord be upon you; take heed what you do, for there is no perversion **of justice** with the Lord our **God**, or partiality, or taking bribes.[23]

> The Almighty-we cannot find him; he is great in power and **justice**, and abundant righteousness he will not violate.[24]

> Righteousness and **justice** are the foundation of thy throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before thee.[25]

> But the LORD of hosts is exalted in **justice**, and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness.[26]

> Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you; therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a **God of justice**; blessed are all those who wait for him.[27]

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20 Exodus 9.14 (RSV)
21 Lyyton, *Journal of Law and Religion,* Vol. 18, No. 1 (2002-2003): 41.
22 Deuteronomy 32.4 (RSV)
23 2 Chronicles 19.7 (RSV)
24 Job 37.23 (RSV)
25 Psalm 89.14 (RSV)
26 Isaiah 5.16 (RSV)
27 Isaiah 30.18 (RSV)

> You have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet you say, "How have we wearied him?" By saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight **of** the Lord, and he delights in them." Or by asking, "Where is the **God of justice**?[28]

In these passages, the writers use a derivative of špṭ – in this case – mišpāṭ – for justice, which, among its various meanings, carries a "decided judicial connotation."[29] Walter J. Houston comments: "The God of Israel is consistently seen as a god of justice, though we must realize that even in the Bible that word has many different connotations."[30]

Appearing 425 times throughout the HB, mišpāṭ dominates the prophetic writings occurring 144 times. Of these, several passages exemplify the idea of justice as a societal call for care and fairness among people, as the following, from First and Third Isaiah make evident:

> Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek **justice** (Heb.- mišpāṭ), rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.[31]

> Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees, and the writers who keep writing oppression, to turn aside the needy from **justice** (Heb.- mišpāṭ) and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey![32]

> Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be

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28 Malachi 2.17 (RSV)

29 P. Enns, "mišpāṭ," NIDOTTE 2:1142-1144; R. Culver, "špṭ," TWOT 2:947-949.

30 Walter J. Houston, *Justice: The Biblical Challenge* (London/New York: Routledge, 2014), 12. Italics are not in the original.

31 Isaiah 1.16-17 (RSV)

32 Isaiah 10.1-2 (RSV)

> your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am. "If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.[33]

> For I the LORD love **justice** (Heb.- mišpāṭ), I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.[34]

The call to "seek justice" in the first passage implies a "mode of action."[35] Justice, therefore, is not static but an active imperative call from the God of Israel. Reinhold Niebuhr is helpful in observing how, "Justice was not equal justice but a bias in favor of the poor. Justice always leaned toward mercy for the widows and the orphans."[36] To emphasize God as the God of justice, or that it is God's primary concern, is to speak of an attribute describing the character of God but not necessarily, the essence of God's being. As demonstrated in the aforementioned passages, the writers of the Hebrew Bible affirm the testimony of the God of justice, but it is essential to note how this characteristic emanates from the holiness of God.

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

God as holy is, quintessentially, the being and essence of God. God cannot be a God of justice without being holy. Isaiah's statement is poignant declaring that, "the LORD of hosts is exalted by justice (Heb. - mišpāṭ), and the Holy God (Heb. - whā'ēl hāqādôš) shows himself holy (Heb. - nīqdôš) by righteousness."[37] The implication, therefore, is clear: justice cannot exist without holiness. It follows, then, that the

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33 Isaiah 58.6-10 (RSV)

34 Isaiah 61.8 (RSV)

35 Abraham J. Heschel, T*he Prophets: Two Volumes in One* (Peabody: Prince Press, 2000), I. 201.

36 Reinhold Niebuhr, *Pious and Secular America* (New York: Scribner, 1958), 92, quoted in Heschel, The Prophets: Two Volumes in One, 201.

37 Isaiah 5.16 (RSV)

God of holiness must exist, as a starting point, if God, as the God of justice, has any right to make declarations such as the ones presented above, and justice is to hold ground, be credible, and have validation within human existence. The recognition and acceptance of the one, while simultaneously negating and rejecting the other, nullifies the existence and being of a universal moral-law giver. Consequentially, every ascribable attribute of and to God, as well as the demand for a God of justice to act on behalf of the weak, the downtrodden, the poor, and the oppressed is but a utopian manifesto that will never see the light of day.

Attributes such as love, just, faithful, and goodness, for example, describe the character and perfection of God; all attributes, however, originate from the holiness of God. The predominant emphasis by modern society on God as solely "love"[38] is to misunderstand the fullness of God's being.[39] To be sure, neither the HB nor the NT over-emphasis any one attribute in comparison to that of God as holy, as seen in the following two passages:

> In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two, he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said:
>
> **Holy**, **holy**, **holy** (Heb. - *qādôš, qādôš, qādôš*) is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.[40]
>
> And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all round and within, and day and night they never cease to

38 1 John 4.8 (RSV)

39 See, for example, Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics II.I: The Doctrine of God* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957, 1997), 351: "God is He who in His Son Jesus Christ loves all His children, in all His children all men, and in men His whole creation. God's being is His loving. He is all that He is as the One who loves. All His perfections are the perfections of His love."

40 Isaiah 6.1-3 (RSV)

> sing, **Holy**, **holy**, **holy**, (Grk. - *hagios, hagios, hagios*) is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come![41]

Nowhere does the biblical text show a similar passage or phrase either in tone or in nature. God declares Godself as holy, in the following instances:

> For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; you shall therefore be holy, for **I am holy**.[42]

> You shall be holy to me; for **I the Lord am holy**, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine.[43]

> I am the Lord, your **Holy One**, the Creator of Israel, your King.[44]

> Thus says the Lord God: When I gather the house **of** Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and manifest **my holiness** in them in the sight **of** the nations, then they shall dwell in their own land which I gave to my servant Jacob.[45]

> And **my holy name** I will make known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let **my holy name** be profaned anymore; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord, **the Holy One** in Israel.[46]

The passages convey a picture of the holiness of God as that of "other," "purity," and "redemption." The inclusiveness of "other" entails distinctiveness, separation, peerless, and transcendence over and above creation, human beings, and, contrastively, the very pantheon of ANE deities. As "pure" God is both morally and ethically perfect – there is neither evil nor partiality in God's being, providence, and sovereignty, irrespective of human perception of God's working in the world. As "redemptive" God demonstrates concern for the welfare of humans by

41 Revelation 4.8 (RSV)
42 Leviticus 11.45 (RSV)
43 Leviticus 20.26 (RSV)
44 Isaiah 43.15 (RSV)
45 Ezekiel 28.25 (RSV)
46 Ezekiel 39.7 (RSV)

empathizing with their suffering and delivering them from the same. Third Isaiah succinctly captures the essence of the points mentioned: "For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.'"[47]

God's holiness makes a demand on human life, as demonstrated in the book of Leviticus' Holiness Code.[48] Specifically, Leviticus 19 is, both, a call to ritual and moral holiness. While the former contextually applies to Israel's then known religious system and subsequent practices after their departure from Egypt, the latter applies to human interaction and relationships. Jonathan Burnside suggests that the call to "all the congregation of the people of Israel" is one of sharing in the holiness of Yahweh.[49] The implication unequivocally suggests that, as a member of the "congregation of all Israel," an individual must be holy, even as Yahweh is holy. What does this mean?

According to Nardoni, "the norms for social life (vv. 3a, 9-18) are intertwined with the regulations governing public worship (vv. 3b-8). Moreover, both are located under the rubric: "'Be holy as I am holy" (v. 2). This rubric is a call to imitate the sanctity of Yahweh as much in worship acts as in social behavior. The call presupposes that the sanctity of God is imitated when his precepts are obeyed. It is worth noting that this chapter ends a long list of socially ethical obligations with the

47 Isaiah 57.15 (RSV)

48 Leviticus 17-26. Obery M. Hendricks, Jr. points the Holiness Code is one of three passages making up the Law Codes: the other two are the Book of the Covenant (Exodus 20.22-23.33), and the Deuteronomic Code (Deuteronomy 12-26), in T*he Politics of Jesus: Rediscovering the True Revolutionary Nature of Jesus' Teachings and How They Have Been Corrupted* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 45. Incidentally, the Exodus passage is preceded by the people's reaction to the "thunderings and lightnings and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking" and saying to Moses, 'You speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die" (vss.18-19); a clear manifestation of, and reaction to, the holiness of God.

49 Jonathan Burnside, *God, Justice and Society: Aspects of Law and Legality in the Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 37; Leviticus 19.2 (RSV).

precept: "'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' (v. 18b)."[50] The identity of the neighbor is clear: the poor, the sojourner, the servant, the deaf, the blind, the old man, and "the stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you; and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. . ."[51]

Burnside and Nardoni's observation on Leviticus 19 is provocative, making the Gospel narratives of Jesus' ministry and teachings and, consequently, the entirety of the New Testament texts challenging as it relates to social justice. When questioned concerning the greatest commandment in the law, Jesus responds, "You shall love (Grk. - agapēseis) the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend (Grk. – krematai) all the law and the prophets."[52] The response essentially elicits recognition of, and a "face to face" dealing with, the "Other," who, in this case, is God and all God represents. For Jesus' first-century audience and context, recognizing God implied acknowledging God's holiness, as expressed in the words, "Our Father, who is in heaven; hallowed (Grk. – hagiasthētō) be your name."[53] Indeed, the phrase does not call for God to sanctify who and what God already is; it is a request for God's name to be holy through the lives of the ones calling upon God. "To hallow God's name," says Warren Carter, "is to honor God in doing God's will . . . and in recognizing God's faithful, and saving actions . . . Such actions reveal God as God, the one who gives life to humans and who demands that humans live so that all

50 Nardoni, *Rise Up, O Judge*, 86. Italics are not in the text. Incidentally, in the Spanish original, Nardoni uses the word "santidad"; literally translated, as "holiness." The word "sanctity", while meaning "a state or quality of being holy" diminishes the essence of God's being; holiness is not a state of God but God's very being. Why the translator preferred "sanctity" to "holiness" is quite baffling, to say the least.

51 Leviticus 19.10, 13, 14, 32, 33, 34 (RSV)

52 Matthew 22.34-40 (RSV); see also Mark 12.28-31 and Luke 10.26-27.

53 Matthew 6.9; Luke 11.2; Jesus himself recognized the holiness of God - John 17.11 (RSV).

may enjoy life."[54] The effect of this recognition, accordingly, provokes one of two reactions: 1) a repudiation and rejection of the Being of God resulting in hatred toward God and disingenuous love toward neighbor; 2) an all acceptance of the Being of God resulting in love (Grk. – agapē) toward God and neighbor. Carter's assessment, therefore, makes it possible to view the Matthaean narrative of the Beatitudes as carrying this spirit of recognition in the words, "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect,"[55] and how this is to influence human interactions and social justice. Thus, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" is tantamount to "love the Lord your God" as the one cannot exist without the other; both are inseverable.

HOLINESS OF GOD, SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND BELOVED COMMUNITY

The preceding sections of this essay have succinctly examined justice as understood within ANE culture and the HB, including a discussion regarding the holiness of God as the foundation for justice. We now inquire how this relates to Beloved Community and whether it is realistically and humanly achievable in modern times, i.e., the twenty-first century.

"Beloved Community" first appeared in a series of Oxford lectures captured and published in the 1913 work, The Problem of Christianity, by idealist philosopher, Josiah Royce (1855-1916). It is within this context the phrase sees the light of day:

> The power that gives to the Christian convert the new loyalty is what Paul calls Grace. And the community to which, when grace saves him, the convert is thenceforth to be loyal, we may here venture to call by a name which we have not hitherto used. Let this name be 'The Beloved Community.' This is another name for what we before called the Universal community. Only now the Universal Community will appear to us in a new light, in view of its relations to the doctrine of grace. And the realm of this Beloved Community, whose relations

54 Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000), 164; see also, Jeffrey B. Gibson, *The Disciples' Prayer: the Prayer Jesus Taught in its Historical Setting* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015)114-120.

55 Matthew 5.48 (RSV); Carter, Matthew and the Margins, 157.

> Christianity conceives, for the most part, in supernatural terms, will constitute what, in our discussion, shall be meant by the term 'The Realm of Grace.'[56]

Royce's understanding of Beloved Community stemmed from the concept of loyalty, which he understood to be "the practically devoted love of an individual for a community."[57] This "devoted love", in the manner by which Royce uses it throughout his lectures, is triggered by agapē, though he never makes mention of the word itself. The community of which he speaks "is not a mere collection of individuals. It is a sort of live unit, that has organs, as the body of an individual has organs. A community grows or decays, is healthy or diseased, is young or aged, much as any individual member of the community possesses such characters. Each of the two, the community or the individual member, is as much a live creature as is the other."[58] Though Royce gave the impression that of a theologian throughout his lectures, he simply used Christianity as an idealistic example of what humankind looks like in community.

Martin Luther King, Jr. saw "Beloved Community" metaphorically as "a transcendent social order . . . heaven incarnate . . . an inclusive community here on earth."[59] In his eyes, King, Jr. envisioned "Beloved Community" as the Kingdom of God lived out in the present age, rather than in the eschaton:

> The Kingdom of God will be a society in which men and women live as children of God should live. It will be a kingdom controlled by the law of love . . . Many have attempted to say that the ideal of a better world will be worked out in the next world. But Jesus taught men to say, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Although the world

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56 Josiah Royce, *The Problem of Christianity* (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 125. Royce also makes use of the word "brotherhood" throughout his work; a word frequently used by Martin Luther King, Jr. in his sermons, public speeches, and writings.

57 Royce, The Problem of Christianity, 41.

58 Royce, The Problem of Christianity, 80.

59 Donald M. Chinula, *Building King's Beloved Community: Foundations for Pastoral Care and Counseling with the Oppressed* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1997), 60.

> seems to be in bad shape today, we must never lose faith in the power of God to achieve his purpose.[60]

Beloved Community is to be characterized by the "brotherhood of man", where humanity is interconnected with one another, regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, and social class under the "Fatherhood of God." It is "a transformed society committed to justice, peace, and love. Its citizens are transformed persons, imbued with a passion for peacemaking, justice, and love."[61]

Royce's and King Jr.'s belief in "Beloved Community" advocated for justice among human beings; that is, every human is equal and deserving of equitable treatment and recognition. Decent and dignified treatment between humans is not simply noteworthy but the humane thing to practice. However, justice for the sake of justice, without a cognitive recognition for its purpose and raison d'etre makes the endeavors for Beloved Community worthless and unachievable, for the following reasons. First, the call for justice – for social justice – is an appeal that is beyond the reach of a self-centered and narcissistic society unwilling to look beyond itself. From the first pages of the HB, and through the final chapters of the NT, the portrayal of human life and interaction clearly demonstrates a profound problem within the human heart. The numerous accounts of murder, deceit, unfair wage earnings, oppression, ill-gotten wealth, judicial corruption, domestic violence, rape, to name but a few, result from a heavily distorted and disfigured image of the Creator God within the created being. Is it any wonder the motive behind the first recorded homicide is questioned?[62] Jesus clearly states that the inability of human beings "getting along" in a rightful and just manner, is unequivocally due to interior corruption: "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a man . . ."[63] Second, humanity's attempt

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60 Martin Luther King, Jr., "A Christian View of the World," in *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. Volume 1: Called to Serve, January 1929-June 1951*. Clayborne Carson, Ralph Luker, and Penny A. Russell, eds. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 283.

61 Chinula, *Building King's Beloved Community*, 60.

62 1 John 3.11-13; Genesis 4.1-8

63 Matthew 15.19-20 (RSV)

to surpass and transcend itself into being better has only resulted in perpetual suspicion, distrust, and bickering within societal interaction and relations. Clearly, the persistent racial divide in the United States, and a biased judicial system favoring the powerful and oppressing the weak, demonstrates a brief sample in the futility of human ingenuity to better itself and society; the HB's Tower of Babel narrative is a case in point.[64]

Humanity's incapacity to acknowledge and recognize the source of justice is, third, Beloved Community's inability to come into full fruition in modern society. The discussion of justice in the ANE showed an understanding of its origins in a concept not originating from a deity, or a plethora of deities, but from a cosmic order outside of itself. In contrast, the Hebrew nation of Israel saw justice solely centered and originating in one deity – Yahweh; a deity having no beginning and self-sufficient. It is this deity King, Jr. proclaimed as the source of Beloved Community. However, the proclamation of Beloved Community as the kingdom of God on earth fails to see God for who God is – holy. Every attribute characterizing the person of God is summed in this one word; including justice. Thus, humanity's unwillingness to recognize God as holy defeats its efforts in achieving societal justice and, for that matter, Beloved Community. Fourth, for humanity to recognize the holiness of God means a willingness to admit God as "Other" and completely different in every aspect from humans. It acknowledges supremacy of a higher being, Creator and, for that matter, Sovereign. Thus, if Creator and Supreme, then it must follow that humanity submits before this God. The recognition of God's holiness results in the transformation of the human heart and human behavior. King, Jr., spoke about the moral transformation within an individual, a transformation that "cannot take place, except by the cooperation of man with God in promoting it."[65] Indeed, reckoning with a holy God can only result in a transformed life. The avoidance to recognize and acknowledge the holy God, will simply

64 Genesis 11.1-9

65 Martin Luther King, Jr., "How God Works Today Through His Spirit," in *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. Volume 1: Called to Serve, January 1929-June 1951*. Clayborne Carson, Ralph Luker, and Penny A. Russell, eds. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 249.

allow the vicious cycle of inhumane and unjust treatment between humans to continue. Justice stems from a holy God that transforms the human heart leading to a transformed society.

CLOSING REMARK

The topic discussed challenges us, and members of the human race and modern society, as we attempt to achieve Beloved Community. Both Royce and King, Jr. strongly believed this was, and is, a possibility. We have seen how justice, in and of itself, is not an abstract concept or idea, but is rooted in a Being that is Supreme and Holy. If Beloved Community is ever to become a reality, it beckons upon human civilization to recognize the realization that societal injustices stem an internal, rather than an eternal, problem. The "kingdom of God" as King, Jr. envisioned is, by all intent and purpose, a supernatural kingdom rooted in a Holy God. Yet, the unattainability of Beloved Community is humanity's failure to look at the very essence of God. Indeed, we are content to talk the mercy, grace, righteousness, and justice of God; and for these aspects, God is worth acknowledging. However, it is the holiness of God, the very essence of the Being of God, that is avoided and unmentionable when society demands justice. In its demand, however, it must recognize that "there is God's justice, which is not really distinct from [God's] holiness."[66] Beloved Community becomes a reality upon this acknowledgement.

66 Jonathan Edwards, *Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith. The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Vol. 21. Edited by Sang Hyun Lee (Binghamton: Yale University Press, 2003), 131.

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The Ministry of Transcendence in 21st Century Post-Christian America

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ABSTRACT

The Church does not have the same influence that it once had in American society. We live in a post-Christian consumeristic culture that thrives on the dehumanization of its fellow human beings. Thus, this essay argues that in order to effectively reach our culture, the ministry of the Church must transcend or rise above the culture in thought, word, and deed. The ministry of transcendence is one that is humanizing. This ministry affirms the inherent dignity of each individual by honoring the body, caring for the soul, and renewing the mind.

THE MINISTRY OF TRANSCENDENCE

We live in a post-Christian society, characterized by distrust of institutions, anger and mass exodus from the Church, and social and political division. The "if you build it, they will come" model for Church has come and gone with the days of Dwight Eisenhower. Ours is a culture of consumption founded on a "what's in it for me?" orientation towards the world; thus, getting people to come to church is a difficult feat. If church does not provide a perceived benefit, then Sunday morning will feature empty pews, but packed fitness centers and coffee shops. What then is the answer? How can the hope of the gospel make a positive impact on the culture?

It is my contention that in order for the Church to effectively reach our post-Christian culture in the 21st century, our ministry must be transcendent. To transcend is to go beyond the limits; to cross boundaries. A transcendent ministry rises above the culture in thought, word, and deed. In particular, the Church must offer the world something fundamentally different than what the culture offers the world. It must rise above the culture in thought, word, and deed. This is why I shy away from use of the word "countercultural." Countercultural carries the connotation of reactionary. It is the stuff of which the culture-wars are made, which have arguably left a spiritual trail of destruction in their wake; likely responsible for the dwindling numbers of church-goers. What I am advocating is deeper than a cheap rebranding of culture; rather, it is something of a different substance than culture—something *transcendent*.

Now, I must clarify that I am not advocating that the Church invent a catchy new gimmick to "corner the market" so-to-speak. To do so would only serve to play into the hands of consumerism. The pop-theologies of the prosperity gospel and the New Thought movement already do this well. The Church must offer something for which the world will say, "I don't know what it is about them, but they're different." This "difference" or otherworldliness should be something both positive and challenging. The transcendent nature of our Christian witness should take people by storm. It should be winsome and beautiful. There is one major way that I suggest that the ministry of the Church in 21st century

post-Christian America can be transcendent; thus, effectively reaching the culture. That is by being: *humanizing*.

Our commodified consumeristic culture is dehumanizing. We have placed what we want over the good of the other, stripping away our dignity and the dignity of our fellow human beings in the process. In fall 2017, we saw in the #MeToo movement the plight of thousands of female survivors of sexual violence brought to light. Many of these survivors were forced to suffer in silence—victims of the unrestrained impulse of domineering men who reduced their female counterparts, fellow human beings, down to objects to be used for their own gratification.

In order to be the transcendent voice in our culture, the voice that rises above the base objectification of human bodies, the Church must have a *ministry of humanization*. In other words, we must recognize that we are human beings created in the image and likeness of God. Stephanie Paulsell writes, "the affirmation that every body is made in the image of God is supplemented in Christianity by the belief that God was somehow fully present in a particular human body…Jesus of Nazareth."[1] St. Athanasius famously wrote that God "became man so that we might become god."[2] There is no higher honor than to be destined to become "partakers in the divine nature" (2 Peter 2:4), reigning and ruling with Christ (Romans 8:17; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 3:21). If Christian theology states that the destiny of humanity, through Christ, is to share in the Divine nature, then it means that our bodies have immense value in the economy of God.

The ministry of humanization takes three forms which we will explore. The first is body. Our humanity is comprised in part by a physical body that needs to be cared for or "honored" as Stephanie Paulsell's book title, *Honoring the Body,* attests. The second component of the ministry of humanization is to care for the soul. Our souls account for our passions and desires. These must be reoriented to God in order for us to flourish. The third form that the ministry of humanization takes is the renewal of the mind. Consumer culture lulls the mind into

1 Stephanie Paulsell, *Honoring the Body: Meditations on a Christian Practice* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 7.

2 St. Athanasius the Great of Alexandria, *On the Incarnation,* trans. John Behr (Yonkers, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 107.

distraction. The transcendence of Christianity has the power to renew the mind, awakening it to higher heights of potential. Taken together, these three modes of the ministry of humanization: honoring the body, caring for the soul, and renewal of the mind have the potential to offer the culture the transforming transcendence of the gospel of Christ.

Honoring the body is probably the most visible aspect of the ministry of humanization simply because we are physical beings. A person's physical body is the first thing we encounter when we meet them. Four of the five senses are most often stimulated when we encounter another human in everyday life (taste, perhaps if they are a significant other). Therefore, how we interact with bodies matters a great deal. Jesus demonstrated this fact in the way he conducted his ministry. He used his body to travel extensively while healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and extending his arms of welcome to the outcast. He ultimately sacrificed his body for the redemption of the world. Whether this is done through social justice ministries or by simply providing a ministry of presence, we who follow in the way of Jesus can imitate Christ's ministry by using our bodies to uplift the humanity of other bodies.

Reformed philosopher and cultural critic James K.A. Smith, advocates an incarnational and sacramental revision to contemporary Protestant theology that is more congruent with the way humans function. Smith calls this a "Christian social imaginary."[3] Because human beings have physical bodies that are imaginative and driven by desire, the traditional Protestant approach to theology—of defining the Christian faith by a "summary of doctrines"[4] to be mechanically internalized — is misguided. Smith argues that Christian doctrine developed over time out of Christian *practice* (actions that are done with the body), not out of having the right belief system.[5] It is simply more consistent with human nature to begin with practices according to Smith, who writes, "biblical anthropology suggests…a bottom-up, practices-first model that prioritizes worship as a practice of desire." Smith notes, we

3 James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 133.

4 Ibid., 133-134.

5 Ibid., 136.

are practice-oriented;[6] therefore, we require concrete practices to form us into ministers of humanization who honor the body. The Roman Catholic tradition offers seven practices called the "Corporal Works of Mercy." They are: feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, visit the sick, visit those in prison, bury the dead, and give alms to the poor.[7] This is not to say that every congregant in every church must do all seven. Certainly, there are physical, temporal, and economic limitations that make this impossible (e.g. consider the limitations of a disabled parishioner). However, the Church as a whole—the Body of Christ, can be committed to this imitation of Christ's earthly ministry. Honoring the body in these ways, transformed the ancient Roman empire. Rodney Stark documents:

> The power of Christianity lay…[in] the rapidly spreading awareness of a faith that delivered potent antidotes to life's miseries here and now! The truly revolutionary aspect of Christianity lay in moral imperatives such as '*Love one's neighbor as oneself…*,'and '*When you did it to the least of my brethren, you did it unto me*.' These were not just slogans. Members did nurse the sick, even during epidemics; they did support orphans, widows, the elderly, and the poor; they did concern themselves with the lot of slaves.[8]

The old adage, "actions speak louder than words" is applicable here. The ancient Church, through its Christian practices of honoring the body, lived out the ministry of humanization and transcended the culture. As a result, within a few hundred years, Christianity transformed the culture. Cultural transformation was not achieved through preaching or debate, but rather through the power of love that humanized the very people whom the society dehumanized. Do we not have a similar opportunity in the 21st century? Instead of endless debates over hot-button issues, what if the contemporary Church took up the practice of honoring the body by adopting orphans, hosting refugees, and visiting elderly persons without surviving family? In this way, the Church would

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6 Ibid.

7 Paragraph 2447; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 648.

8 Rodney Stark, *Cities of God: The Real Story of How Christianity Became an Urban Movement and Conquered Rome* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 30.

take a lead role in cultural catechesis—teaching others by living out the humanization that we wish to see replicated in the wider society. A challenging proposition indeed.

Another way that we honor the body and practice the ministry of humanization is by tearing down the walls of division, whether social, racial or political. Dehumanization of those who are different from us breeds alienation and estrangement. In his book, *Urban Ministry: An Introduction*, Ronald Peters offers an excellent description of alienation as the emphasis of our difference as opposed to what we have in common.[9] Peters goes on to note that cities are hotbeds of alienation. Though people live in close proximity, "their emotional proximity can be quite distant," he writes, calling it, "contact without fellowship."[10] The urban environment has such potential to be a testament to the beauty of human diversity and what we can achieve when we live and work together. Sadly, however, it is often a segregated wilderness of conflict and alienation. The ministry of humanization expressed in honoring the body provides the antidote to this problem. By virtue of our baptism, we as Christians have a transformed perspective of humanity. The bodies of other human beings matter.[11] We honor the uniqueness of each human body as a wonder to behold, created by God, and through Christ, destined to reign with Christ forever. Nourished by this understanding, if every single body matters, then Christians cannot help but to transcend societal divides. St. Paul writes, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female…" (Galatians 3:28).[12] All earthly categories devised to dominate and oppress people must disappear.

Not only do we see the culture of dehumanization at work when it comes to race and class, we also see it in the ideological disagreements of our day. Instead of playing into the ideological polarization of our culture, we must honor the bodies of those with whom we disagree. Amanda

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9 Ronald E. Peters, *Urban Ministry: An Introduction* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 14.

10 Ibid., 14.

11 This is essentially what is meant by the #Black Lives Matter movement in our current cultural context. It is in essence reminding the world that black bodies matter, too.

12 *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1984)

Miller explores the "boundary-breaking ministry"[13] of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke and applies it to our current American political discourse. She asks the rhetorical question, "what if…the word 'Christian' brought to mind the image of people who host meals and build relationships with people from all political parties, all socioeconomic groups, and all different races and religions?"[14] The ministry of humanization sees the image of God in those who are our ideological opposites. They too, are enfleshed bodies that matter and must be honored, not dehumanized and excluded.

We shift now to the second form of the ministry of humanization—caring for the soul. Our souls carry our passions and desires. Desire in and of itself is a morally neutral human force. In his book, *Eros and Self-Emptying: The Intersections of Augustine and Kierkegaard*, Lee Barrett provides Augustine's conception of desire, which is "like an arrow in motion seeking its target," with an "internal momentum and directionality."[15] Summarizing the corpus of Augustine's teaching, Barrett states that at the heart of desire is a longing for happiness.[16] Desire, in this sense, always has a target. Shannon Jung writes that "desire is directed; it is always tethered to some object."[17] Desire is a natural human force that in and of itself cannot be judged as good or bad. Jung continues in what is a crucial point to be considered when discussing desire: "what desire is tethered to makes all the difference. If tethered to an illusory or unworthy object, desire itself is empty or destructive."[18] I contend that it is the object of one's desire that must be scrutinized, rather than desire itself. The goal in Augustine's view was not an abolition of desire, but a reformation of desire.[19] St. Gregory the

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13 Amanda C. Miller, "Good sinners and exemplary heretics: The sociopolitical implications of love and acceptance in the Gospel of Luke," *Review and Expositor 112*, no. 3 (2015): 466.

14 Ibid., 469.

15 Lee C. Barrett, *Eros and Self-Emptying: The Intersections of Augustine and Kierkegaard* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 68.

16 Ibid., 68.

17 L. Shannon Jung, "The Reeducation of Desire in a Consumer Culture," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics 32*, no. 1 (2012): 23.

18 Ibid., 23.

19 Ibid., 73.

Great, often referred to by scholars as the doctor of desire, wrote that the pains of life propel one to desire God. Desire for God, in his view, is the most legitimate telos of desire.[20] Barrett writes, "human desires must be transformed and reoriented in order to long for God rightly."[21] Desire can be likened to a hunger pang. Physical hunger pangs can be temporarily satisfied by fast food, but ultimately our bodies require adequate nutrition to function at an optimal level. Occasional fast food is not bad, it is just not ideal. Similarly, our desires can be temporarily satiated by other things in the created order, but they ultimately find their most complete fulfillment in God.

As Augustine says in his opening paragraph of *Confessions*, "you made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you."[22] Thus, the Christian life becomes a journey of ordering the object of one's desires to have God as their central focus. In this schema, sin against God becomes, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, a betrayal of our deepest desires.[23]

If we decide to adapt the view that our desires ultimately find their fulfillment in God, which for both Augustine and Kierkegaard is the human's highest happiness,[24] then we have to conclude that desire in and of itself is not the villain. Rather, humans are on a journey of discovery of the object of their true desires—the Divine. Exploring Augustine's theology, Barrett notes that in order for one to develop a new desire for God, God must initiate with humanity; which itself is an act of love.[25] For a desire for God to be properly cultivated, one must be able to see the attractiveness of God. In Kierkegaard's view the attractiveness of God is "elicited by the incarnate Christ."[26] Christ, then, becomes the

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20 Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982), 31.

21 Ibid., 74.

22 Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin (London: Penguin Books, 1961), 21.

23 Nicholas Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 242.

24 Lee C. Barrett, *Eros and Self-Emptying: The Intersections of Augustine and Kierkegaard*, 110.

25 Ibid., 80.

26 Ibid.

physical manifestation of the irresistibility of God. In this way, humans now have a corporeal object of desire to move towards.

Kierkegaard's view presupposes the necessity of incarnation in the economy of desire. Thus, the body is a central component in desire. Desire simply cannot be separated from the physical realm. If making God the ultimate object of our desires is the goal of the Christian life, or as Jung phrases it, "human desire finds its telos in loving God,"[27] then how can we love that which we have not seen? If, as a physical people, we can best understand that which is tangibly manifested, then would it not be fitting for God who wishes to be the object of our desires, to be physically manifested? St. Athanasius offers an answer: "once the mind of human beings descended to perceptible things, the Word himself submitted to appear through a body, so that as a human he might bring humans to himself and return their sense of perception to himself…"[28] Central to the redemption of humanity was the manifestation of the ultimate object of human desire, God—in human flesh. The Incarnation of Christ, then, serves not only as the ultimate endorsement of the body, but also the way to save the soul. The entire body and its desires are redeemed by God and elevated to operate on a higher level.

The ministry of humanization bids us to care for the soul by helping each other reorient our desires. It is through our Christian practices that we care for the souls of our fellow humans. Another word for this is Christian education.[29] Through the example of our lives, albeit imperfectly, we can image what rightly ordered desires can look like and in this way, care for the soul. By modeling genuine enjoyment of temporal pleasures and self-regulation of excess we can demonstrate to society that our desires are not ends in of themselves, but are ultimately pointing towards the Creator who gives us good gifts to enjoy. The culture dehumanizes itself by focusing solely on the fulfillment of desire as expressed in sex, money, power, etc., to the exclusion of God. This kills the soul. As Christians, our sights are set higher than the material world itself. Desire is neither denied nor abolished; rather it is redirected. Thus, we have the opportunity through the transcendent practice of caring for

27 L. Shannon Jung, "The Reeducation of Desire in a Consumer Culture," 31.

28 St Athanasius the Great of Alexandria, *On the Incarnation16*, 66.

29 James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 18-19.

the soul, to show the culture that the fullness of the fulfillment of desire is found in God.

Lastly, the third mode of the transcendent ministry of humanization is the renewal of the mind. St. Paul writes in his Epistle to the Romans, "do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind"[30] (Romans 12:2). Here we see the transcendent power of Christianity to lift our minds out of the thought patterns of society and into the loftier things of God. Contrary to the popular myth of Christian ignorance, Christianity has made an extraordinary contribution to human intellectual pursuits and the development of knowledge. As Roman Catholic Bishop, Robert Barron notes, "the vast majority of the founding figures of modern science—Copernicus, Newton, Kepler, Descartes, Pascal, Tycho Brahe—were devoutly religious…it is no accident that modern science appeared precisely in Christian Europe…"[31] Human intellect is not just limited to the study of science. The fields of study of philosophy, rhetoric, and theology were all greatly advanced by thinkers such as Augustine, Origen, Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Julian of Norwich, etc.

30 *The Holy Bible: New International Version*

31 Robert Barron, *Vibrant Paradoxes: The Both/And of Catholicism* (Skokie, IL: Word on Fire Catholic Ministries, 2016), 50-51.

The ministry of humanization, as expressed in renewal of the mind, can show our culture that our Christian faith does not breed ignorance, but the love of God expands our intellectual capacities. As Bishop Barron writes:

> authentic faith never involves sacrificium intellectus (a sacrifice of the intellect). God wants us to understand all we can about him through reason. By analyzing the order, beauty, and the contingency of the world, there is an enormous amount of information we can gather concerning God.[32]

There is a deep intellectual tradition in Christendom of which we can be proud.

The Christian practice of renewal of the mind can also include modeling the pursuit of intellectual endeavors such as studying or simply meditating on that which is transcendent over that which is banal. In their book, *Seven Revolutions: How Christianity Changed the World and Can Change It Again*, Mike Aquilina and James Papandrea compare the bloodthirsty ancient Roman gladiatorial games with what they refer to as our modern day "culture of celebrity and humiliation as entertainment."[33] The transcendent faith of the early Church lifted the Roman empire out of the bowels of dehumanizing games of mortal combat. We have a similar opportunity in the 21st century. "When we watch reality television or read gossip media, we support the very culture that turns a person into a commodity,"[34] writes Aquilina and Papandrea, who go on to say that such media, "invade[s] people's privacy and showcase[s] their humiliation."[35] We must never forget that the Roman empire promoted vapid entertainment to dull the minds of the masses while its emperors engaged in corruption. Fortunately, Christianity transcends culture, forming us to think critically about our world. Thus, the Christian practice of renewing the mind may just save our society from the anti-intellectual dehumanizing culture of humiliation.

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32 Ibid., 63.

33 Mike Aquilina and James L. Papandrea, S*even Revolutions: How Christianity Changed the World and Can Change It Again* (New York: Image, 2015), 238.

34 Ibid., 239.

35 Ibid., 240.

I began by saying that 21st century post-Christian America is tired of "church as usual." This does not mean that we remake Christianity into the image of our culture. Rather, it is a challenge for us to offer to the world, the life-giving gospel of Christ in a way that transcends culture. I have argued that effectively reaching the culture entails transcendence—practicing the ministry of humanization as expressed in the three modes of honoring the body, caring for the soul, and renewing the mind. In imitation of Christ, honoring the body affirms that our physical bodies in all of their diversity and uniqueness matters. Caring for the soul is focused on helping to reorient each other's desires towards God. Finally, renewal of the mind entails elevating the mind to transcend the base and often dehumanizing concerns of the culture, forming it to operate on a higher level. By honoring the image of God in our fellow human beings, we give the world something truly otherworldly. The pattern of the world since the Fall has been that of dehumanization. Christ transcended this when he reconciled the world to God. Fueled by the resurrection power of Christ and inspired by the saints of ages past, the Church has a prime opportunity to practice a ministry of humanization. A life-celebrating, body-affirming, dignifying ministry that communicates the inherent value of every human being will transcend the culture of dehumanization by extending to it the loving embrace of Christ.

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Paul's Great Exclamation (Romans 11:12):

The National Conversion of Ethnic Israel for the Gospel Enlivenment of the Nations unto the Global Fame of Jesus Christ

Brandon Shaw

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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ABSTRACT

The following work argues for the mass salvation of ethnic Israel as a people to Jesus Christ and that said redemption will not only bring the Jewish nation eternal blessing in Christ but also the nations unto the global fame of the Triune God. This brief work concludes with a call to practical application for the sake of ethnic Israel and thus the nations to the world fame of Christ. My grand concern for the Jewish people does not rest in them alone but also is most tied to my zeal for every people to worship God forever.

AN OPENING WORD CONCERNING PAUL'S GREAT EXCLAMATION (ROMANS 11:12)

> "Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and if their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!" (Romans 11:12, ESV).

Before I commenced studies at Wheaton College (IL) in August of 2005, I felt warm-hearted toward ethnic Israel. In my one-person waterbed on that Pennsylvanian summer night, I remember the word "Israel" and an image of the geographical area of Israel, a quasi-close outer space view, both embedded in my mind after hearing about the nation-state on what I remember to be Fox News. My mental impression of Israel that night was so pronounced that I did not dismiss it. Furthermore, a zeal for the salvation of ethnic Israel developed in me over time while in Chicagoland and reached its apex in my soul just under a month until graduation from the place that stands "For Christ and His Kingdom." Since we did not have to translate from English to ancient Hebrew anymore during that fall 2007 term, the ancient language course lightened up, and Iain Murray's *The Puritan Hope* looked exhilarating, especially for one who delights in reading on global missions. In the work, Murray quotes the great Robert Leighton (1611-1684), principal of the University of Edinburgh. Perhaps my favorite extra-biblical quote in existence, Leighton's line reads, "Undoubtedly, that people of the Jews shall once more be commanded to arise and shine, and their return shall be the riches of the Gentiles (Rom. 11:12), and that shall be a more glorious time than ever the Church of God did yet behold."[1] Leighton's words compel me to write this current piece. If Leighton's words are biblically true, then there is no evangelistic or missiological cause more significant than the salvation of Israel. Because of the children of Jacob's mass conversion's grand implications, I argue that there stands nothing of more consequence in the future of this sinful world—before the Second Coming itself—than this happening. Therefore, I suggest there is nothing greater to pursue from a missionary standpoint than the redemption of the Jewish people.

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1 Iain Murray, *The Puritan Hope* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1971), 75.

The body of this piece will underline three points to support the title's claim that Romans 11:12, Paul's great exclamation, is concerning: first, the national conversion of Israel, second, that said redemption en masse is for the gospel vivification of the nations, and, third and finally, this event will take place unto the global fame of Christ. In other words, when good news deliverance is gained by the Jews, God will be greatly glorified globally and therefore Israel's salvation should be preceded by and pursued through prayer and gospel proclamation.

THE NATIONAL CONVERSION OF ISRAEL

First, Israel will be saved as a people group at some future point in world history. The apostle does not merely question if Israel will be included into the church of Christ at some later point. He exclaims it: "…how much more will their full inclusion mean!" (Rom. 11:12). Not a point of debate for Paul, the future salvation of the Jews will occur. This significant redemptive event serves as a matter-of-fact declaration. In his article, "Five Reasons I Believe Romans 11:26 Means a Future Conversion for Israel," theologian John Piper, a pastor and one who preached to me incessantly via DesiringGod.org podcasts, taught me that the end of all things is the glory of God, including even the consuming of orange juice itself. Piper plucks a stunning quote from a work by J.C. Ryle entitled *Are You Ready for the End of Time?* in which Ryle writes, "[The Jews] are kept separate that they may finally be saved, converted and restored to their own land. They are reserved and preserved, in order that God may show in them as on a platform, to angels and men, how greatly he hates sin, and yet how greatly he can forgive, and how greatly he can convert. Never will that be realized as it will in that day when 'all Israel shall be saved.'"[2] Ryle knew his Bible well. Along with Romans 11, the rest of scripture points to this stunning salvation and its grand implications.

The Old Testament heralds this future conversion as well. Jeremiah 31 speaks of the new covenant which God will clearly enact with Israel

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2 John Piper, "Five Reasons I Believe Romans 11:26 Means a Future Conversion for Israel," Desiring God, February 16, 2012, https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/five-reasons-i-believe-romans-11-26-means-a-future-conversion-for-israel (accessed January 12, 2018).

via faith in the deliverer, Christ Jesus. In this section, I must say a word about my own personal hermeneutic. Here I reference the old and new covenants, along with the covenant of grace. The old covenant (or Mosaic covenant) called for Israel's whole-hearted obedience, albeit still imperfect in a sinful world, for God's blessing on the nation. Curses would inevitably follow due to Israel's disobedience. The old covenant showed God's perfect standard to Israel, displayed Israel's inability to keep God's law perfectly, and thus demonstrated Israel's ultimate need for a savior to redeem them from sin. (This savior, Christ, would fulfill God's law perfectly, die as a substitutionary atonement for sin, and rise from death for all who would trust in him and his work of redemption.)

On the other hand, the new covenant—unpacked within the pages of the New Testament quite explicitly—is the clearest articulation of the covenant of grace in Christ to both Israel and the world. In my understanding of covenant theology, the covenant of grace—the good news agreement between God and humankind, both Jews and Gentiles, whereby God calls all people from everywhere to personal faith in Christ for salvation—is ever present throughout the Old Testament in promises, prophecies, and typologies. However, for Jeremiah and all the Old Testament prophets, those who saw the covenant of grace more dimly, the full and final revelation of this grace covenant would not evidence itself fully until the new covenant with the revelation of the God-man, Jesus Christ.

Though I hold that Jeremiah did not conceive of every detail concerning the predicted Christ and this new covenant, I believe the prophet had a general understanding of the covenant of grace—the good news itself because of the Old Testament promises, prophecies, and typologies—which would be fully manifested when Jesus Christ/the new covenant later arrived. I hold that many Old Testament saints embraced the covenant of grace even though it was not fully revealed to them in absolute explicitness, but I also affirm that many did not because of their hard hearts and blindness, as Paul indicates in Romans 11 (and as shown throughout the pages of the Holy Bible). Upon the Jews' initial rejection of the new covenant in Christ, the covenant pronouncedly showcasing the covenant of grace, God—out of his holy love and in his infinite wisdom—grafted in multitudes of Gentiles. My

argument is that the Jews will be included too as a people as well and that this will richly bless the Gentile nations even more, as Romans 11:12 suggests and unto the global fame of King Jesus.

My understanding is that gaining salvation has and will always be through the covenant of grace/the gospel and thus through saving faith in the Messiah and his redeeming work. Since I do not affirm that obtaining salvation in the Old Testament dispensation was through works of obedience, I do acknowledge that though the ancient nation, Israel, must have obeyed corporately for God's general blessing. However, I conclude that it was not a blessing unto their ultimate salvation. Since the means of salvation always was through personal, saving belief in the Christ, the one who was showcased most markedly in the new covenant, my belief is that in no way did individuals in the Old Testament earn justification before God. Flowing from Genesis 3:15 all the way to Revelation 22, the covenant of grace is present throughout the entirety of redemptive history. Still under the covenant of grace umbrella are both the Old and New Testaments. The New Testament is the full revelation of salvation in Jesus Christ, the new covenant, and the Old Testament expresses the old, Mosaic agreement to show God's perfect standard to Israel and their inability to keep said standard. The law pointed to the need for a future deliverer, the person of Christ, along with his redemptive work. Also, the old covenant served as a sort of glue that kept ethnic Israel intact as a nation for later and more lucid gospel and Christological developments—and ultimately for their final redemption as a people unto Christ's world renown.

In view of my interpretative framework, I hold the following prophetic text, Jeremiah 31, is referencing to ethnic Israel as they receive the new covenant, explicit revelation of Christ and his covenant of grace or gospel. As already suggested above, compared to New Testament believers, both Jeremiah himself and those living in the Old Testament epoch possessed a lesser revelation of the covenant of grace in the Old Testament era. See Jeremiah's prophecy concerning Israel's corporate embracement of the new covenant, the full revelation of Christ and his gospel:

> Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jer. 31:31-34)

From my studies in covenant theology (and as already mentioned), I understand that the new covenant is none other than the New Testament's full revelation of Christ himself and his covenant of grace agreement God makes with his elect both Jews and Gentiles. Through Jeremiah, it seems clear that, by the grace of God, Israel will embrace the new covenant with gladness and thus as a people exercise faith alone in Christ alone. In comprehending this new covenant—and thus having a fuller understanding of the covenant of grace—Israel will receive eternal life in Christ which he defines as "knowing" God (John 17:3) now and forever.

Along with Jeremiah, Hosea also speaks explicitly of Israel turning to Jesus at a later point in redemption history. Hosea states, "Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, for you have stumbled because of your iniquity" (Hosea 4:1). Two verses later, Hosea quotes the Lord who says, "I will heal [Israel's] apostasy; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them" (Hosea 4:4). Interestingly, Paul references Israel's stumbling, likely playing off Hosea: "So I ask, did they stumble in order that they might fall? By no means! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous" (Rom. 11:11). With Hosea and Paul taken together, one can easily conclude that the "stumbling" or "apostasy" is certainly not the last word. A future regeneration is coming for Jacob's descendants.

FOR THE GOSPEL ENLIVENMENT OF THE NATIONS

A lead into my second point (that is, that the conversion of ethnic Israel will greatly bless the nations of the world) is Jim R. Sibley's quote: "In [Romans 11:15], Paul argues that their rejection of salvation has brought such blessing to so many, how much greater the blessing when they accept that salvation, for it will not only mean the salvation of individual Israelites, but the spiritual restoration of the nation."[3] Unlike the apostle, Sibley goes no further. To be blunt, Sibley's myopic interpretation deserves a critique. As great as Israel's salvation alone would be, Israel is not merely going to be saved, and thus I suggest the nearsightedness of Sibley's words. The Jews will do more than merely be redeemed. Israel will shine with the gospel unto the salvation of nations for the global glory of God. The Jews are to show the good news splendor of Christ to the peoples of the world. This will dramatically bless the nations of the earth as these human groups see how sweet Christ is for saving his ancient people which he preserved throughout history. His providential preservation of Israel will one day enable Israel to assist the rest of the world to believe in Christ so as to ultimately be delivered from the everlasting wrath to come and to worship, know, and love God forever. Through the historical trials of the Jews, it appears Satan has tried much to thwart this redemption plan! How awesomely God triumphs in the end when he redeems the nations by greatly using ethnic Israel.

See what the Lord says through his prophet Isaiah: "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a burning torch. The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the Lord will give. You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God" (Isa. 62:1-3). Israel will one day shine bright for the glory of Christ in the world, and countless will embrace the gospel because of her witness to the nations. The nations will indeed know God through Israel. After spiritual life is brought to

3 Jim R. Sibley, "Has the Church Put Israel on the Shelf?," *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 58*, no. 3 (2015): 581.

Israel, that is, after the dry bones come to life, the nations will behold Israel's God (Ezek. 37:27-28) for the praise of God. Furthermore, Hosea states that Israel's "fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon" (Hosea 14:7), and Isaiah also declares that Israel "shall be called The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord; and you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken" (Isa. 62:12). In total, Israel will not hide her light under a basket. Glowing with their Christian/gospel joy and knowledge, the Jews, by the grace and through the power of God, will spiritually resurrect the seemingly dead world unto vibrant life (Rom. 11:15). Considering how many negatively view the Jews as a people and Israel—the nation state—it will take a remarkable, spiritual work of God for the nations to love and respect the Jews as a people along with their country's great relevance in the Middle East. The gospel via Israel to the world will bring the love and respect of the world to Israel. That day is on the horizon.

UNTO THE GLOBAL FAME OF JESUS CHRIST

Third and finally, the reason for ethnic Israel's mass conversion and the subsequent gospel blessing to the nations is a means to one ultimate end, that is, the magnification of the Trinitarian God in the earth. After Paul declares his great prophecy in Romans 11, he caps off the section on Israel with these words: "Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! 'For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?' 'Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?' For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen" (Rom. 11:33-36). That God will be glorified (or that he will be shown off in the whole world as he is, great), should serve as the impetus behind our gospel articulations to the Jewish nation. The purpose for the conversion of the Jews and the good news splendor that proceeds from their heart transplant as a people group (Ezek. 36.26) and the purpose of all things as well, both good and bad, is the exaltation of God the providential Father, the redeeming Son, and the enlivening Holy Spirit in the earth and forevermore.

A CLOSING WORD CONCERNING PAUL'S GREAT EXCLAMATION (ROMANS 11:12)

In sum, I am evangelistically fascinated with the sons and daughters of Jacob because their conversion to Christ will prove to bless the nations which in turn will promote the fame of Christ in the world like at no other point before. Not only for Israel's redemption's sake does my zeal brim for Israel. Israel's mass conversion is not an end itself but the means to something unimaginably glorious. As the means to exalt the Trinitarian God greatly in the world and forevermore, the Jewish nation's mass salvation will enrich the earth to an extent not yet beheld as they herald the gospel to the nations upon their grand coming to Christ as a people. Christ says, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14). Ethnic Israel will play no small role in the previous verse's realization.

To conclude, here is my fervent plea: I urge all Christians everywhere to pray for Israel's salvation and to supplicate to be used in some gospel way as a spark that lights the torch (Isa. 62:1) which sets the world ablaze for the world fame of Christ. Note the words of the Scottish church leader Thomas Boston (1676 – 1732): "Have you any love to, or concern for the church, for the work of reformation, the reformation of [Scotland], the reformation of our world? Any longing desire for the revival of that work now at a stand; for a flourishing state of the church, that is now under a decay? Then pray for the conversion of the Jews."[4] If you care greatly for global missions—which will ultimately usher in the Second Coming of Christ—then you should heed the words of Boston and undoubtedly petition God and promote the good news for the regeneration of the Jewish people unto Jesus Christ. Until the day I pass to glory, I will argue that besides the return of Christ itself, there is nothing of greater significance to happen to this sin-engulfed planet than ethnic Israel's mass redemption because of how greatly said salvation will exalt God globally and forevermore. What can the church do to advance the cause of Christ in the world? The body of Christ can labor

4 Thomas Boston, *The Whole Works of the Late Reverend Thomas Boston of Etterick*, ed. Samuel McMillan (Aberdeen: George and Robert King, 1848), 3:359.

for the salvation of ethnic Israel through prayerful and gospel means. Her salvation will in turn bless the nations and magnify God around the world beyond any measure yet to be seen. For the glory of God in the earth, the realization of Romans 11:12, Paul's great exclamation, is really that big. May we be about its actualization for the Lord of salvation and glory. Amen, and amen.

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A Practical Theology of Migration:
South Africa and the Intra-African Diaspora

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I am a M. Div. student at PTS living in Pittsburgh. My prior graduate degree is an MA in Cultural Anthropology from Stanford University. After a career in both the corporate and non-profit worlds I have responded to God's call on me to provide service to His people. I am interested in social justice issues and the theological bases of an appropriate response, especially in the international arena, by Christians to such issues, regardless of denomination or socio-cultural background.

ABSTRACT

I intend to discuss the social justice issue of the intra-African emigration/Diaspora which has taken place over the last decade from West and East Africa to the nation of South Africa. The numbers are staggering: approximately 4,000,000 between 1985 and 2015. This paper illustrates the violent reactions to migrants that can take place when neither the Church nor that State effectively deal with the issues affecting the natives of that country and the disastrous results of such inaction, then presents the theological bases of what I believe the Christian response should be to issues of migration in any nation.

STATEMENT OF INTENT/INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I have chosen to focus on a different African Diaspora than the one generally referred to in books and articles. We most typically read and think about the African Diaspora as the one by which millions of Africans left or were transported out of Africa and formed communities, or at least centers of population, in the Americas and to a lesser degree Europe and Asia. This Diaspora was a result of both the slave trade where Africans had no say in their forced migration or much more voluntary emigration in order to have better lives. There are currently approximately 140 million people of African descent living outside Africa.[1] Even the African Union itself describes the African Diaspora as "[consisting] of people of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship or nationality."[2] However, the migrant group I intend to illuminate is the intra-African emigration/diaspora which has taken place over the last decade from West and East Africa to the nation of South Africa.

According to statistics gathered by the African Development Bank, "For Africa, the intra-Africa emigration rate is about 52%."[3] So we see that more than half of African migrants move within Africa, but when we look at the movement of migrants only from Sub-Saharan Africa, leaving out North Africa, we find that "countries from Sub Saharan Africa [have an emigration rate that] is close to 65%, which represents the largest intra-continental or south-south movement of people in the world."[4] (Migrants from North Africa comprise many of the people taking boats across the Mediterranean to try and reach Southern Europe, often dying en route.) Where do many of these migrants head? Largely South Africa, "where the economy of South Africa is ... the powerhouse

1 Abebe Shimeles, *Migration Patterns, Trends and Policy Issues in Africa, in The African Development Bank Working Paper Series* (Tunis, Tunisia: Development Research Department of the African development Bank, 2010), No. 119-December 2010, 5.

2 "The Diaspora Division Statement". *The Citizens and Diaspora Organizations Directorate* (CIDO). Retrieved May 20, 2017.

3 Shimeles, 8.

4 Ibid.

in attracting miners, and other potential job seekers from neighboring countries as well as from far away countries in East Africa."[5]

I first became interested in this group of migrants when I encountered them in Johannesburg, South Africa during my Valentour mission in the summer of 2016. Most of the migrants in South Africa come from other Southern African countries as noted in the African Development Bank's paper, "South Africa served as a main destination for emigrants from Lesotho [which is a country completely surrounded by South Africa], Swaziland, Botswana, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe."[6] All these countries have much more tenuous economies than South Africa, and, in the case of Zimbabwe, even worse political circumstances. Until late 2017, Zimbabwe had suffered under the reign of an absolute despot, Robert Mugabe, who drained his country dry of resources. As noted by CNN, "[Mugabe's] grip on power has faltered little since he first rose to power in 1980... Mugabe has brought Zimbabwe to the brink of ruin during his almost four decades tenure...ruining his country's agriculture, industry and economy."[7] (When I traveled through Zimbabwe last year, my driver told me people who could not leave Zimbabwe had taken to eating leaves and grass for lack of any other 'food.') Although Mugabe has now been removed from the presidency of Zimbabwe, the country's recovery from his reign will take considerable time so emigrants from that country to South Africa will probably stay put there for the time being.

Since last year, I have read a number of articles about the changing fortunes of these migrants who were once welcomed to South Africa, but since that time, migrants have often been vilified, attacked, and even killed by native South Africans. By this endeavor, I hope to bring the situation in South Africa to greater awareness. In the last section of this paper, I am going to give an example of how one mission group—whom I got to know last year—was ministering to a particular sub-group of

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5 Ibid.

6 Ibid, 26.

7 Euan McKirdy, "Zimbabwe's Mugabe turns 93; lauds Trump's nationalist stance", CNN online, Updated 3:07 AM ET, Tuesday February 21, 2017, accessed May 25, 2017, http://www.cnn.com/2017/02/21/africa/mugabe-93rd-birthday-2018-election/index.html.

migrants and to offer action steps other congregations and/or agencies could take to serve these migrants. In offering these steps I intend to first ground them in the theological and Biblical traditions that are an inherent part of being a Christian and doing God's work. Let us begin.

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE INTRA-AFRICAN DIASPORA

In the book, *The Age of Migration*, the authors note the following: "Since 1989…We have…seen the rise of new intra-African migration poles such as South Africa…Post-apartheid South Africa…draws in migrants from all over the continent, although primarily from Southern Africa."[8] With the end of apartheid in 1994, there was concomitantly a slowing down of emigration from South Africa. Then, in the 2000s, situations like that of Zimbabwe propelled a migration even further to South Africa including "hundreds of thousands of people[from Zimbabwe who] have fled deteriorating economic conditions and political repression since 2000, with the majority seeking work and refuge in South Africa."[9] Part of the impact of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa, which, after the fall of apartheid was constituted to deal with and help heal the suffering brought about by that racist system, was to bring about "an open door policy towards immigrants and refugees."[10] In fact "South Africa adopted a new constitution which gives strong guarantees of migrant rights."[11] However, the lofty goals of the TRC and the new constitution did not always come into reality both as a result of government inaction and because of attitudes of native South Africans. Castles et al tell us that "the government [of South Africa] has often failed to provide migrants access to their immigration status, healthcare, and education."[12] In

8 Stephen Castles, Hein de Haas, & Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration International Population Movements in the Modern World* (Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 184-185.

9 J. Crush, *South Africa: Policy in the Face of Xenophobia* (Washington, DC: Migration Information Source, 2008) quoted in Castles, de Haas, & Miller, T*he Age of Migration International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 184.

10 Adam Shapiro, "Refugees and Immigrants in South Africa", South Africa Study Abroad SASA Blog, Posted on February 1, 2013, Accessed May 25, 2017, http://blogs.elon.edu/sasa/2013/02/01/refugees-and-immigrants-in-south-africa-3/

11 Castles, de Haas, & Miller, 185.

12 Ibid.

reading this I was reminded of the situation in Germany whereby, even with good intentions at first by the state to help incoming migrants, the follow through is spotty or never happens. And in the case of South Africa, where the xenophobia of the people rose as the economy faltered, the government "introduced heavy penalties for unauthorized immigration, and since 1994, 1.7 million undocumented migrants have been deported to neighboring states, like Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Lesotho."[13] Historically, as far as the dynamics of reactions to migrants go, there is dialectic between the attitudes of the people and the policies of the government, both being heavily influenced by the vicissitudes of the economy, and particularly on the availability of jobs. As Khalid Koser put it in his book *International Migration*, "Growing developmental, demographic and democratic disparities provide powerful incentives to move, as does the global jobs crisis affecting large parts of the developing world."[14] Certainly this 'jobs crisis' affected the attitudes of the natives of South Africa where we learn "most citizens experience a strong feeling of negativity towards...refugees and immigrants [xenophobia] and believe that refugees and immigrants are stealing their jobs and contributing to the country's high unemployment."[15] And in South Africa and elsewhere, politicians use the rise of xenophobia to bolster their political campaigns and, when they come to power, launch campaigns against 'unauthorized immigration' or 'undocumented migrants.'

Unfortunately, in South Africa this xenophobic atmosphere has resulted in deadly violence breaking out against African migrants. In fact the term Afrophobia has been applied to this disturbing development. As the theologian Rothney. S. Tshaka describes one such incident, "On the 12th of May, 2008, a chain of insurgencies erupted in the townships of Alexandria in Johannesburg. At least twenty-five people were killed, and many were injured as African immigrants were targeted by the local black South Africans. Most of these immigrants were from

13 Crush, quoted in *The Age of Migration International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 185.

14 Khalid Koser, *International Migration A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 25.

15 Shapiro in the same blog.

Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe."[16] And then the violence spread throughout South Africa, in Gauteng province and cities such as Cape Town and Durban. (Violence reared its ugly head again in riots against immigrants in 2015.) Tshaka goes on to explore all the causes, economic, political, and historical that led to this xenophobic violence. For purposes of this paper, suffice it to say that the economic insecurity of Black South Africans, the way that Black South Africans are still marginalized in their own country, has contributed to their anger toward African migrants and scapegoating them for ills that they were victims of as well.

We have seen this same kind of scapegoating of migrants for taking jobs away from residents in our own and many other countries but thankfully not with the extent of violence that has happened in South Africa. There are obviously many parallels between South Africa and the United States in our treatment of and reaction to migrants. (South Africa has even built some walls on its borders with neighboring countries.) Both countries, although a majority Christian, have wandered far from the root beliefs of our shared faith. In my next section, I am going to turn to theological/Biblical considerations we need to draw upon if we are to treat the migrant in an authentically Christian way.

A CONSIDER OF THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL BELIEFS GUIDING OUR RESPONSE TO THE MIGRANT

There are many strands of theological doctrine and Biblical narrative we can draw upon to forge a truly Christian orientation toward treatment of the migrants in our midst. I am not going to attempt to explore them all in detail. The three strands I find most fruitful and inspiring can be described by the following rubrics: creation/evangelical theology, the practice of hospitality toward the stranger as evidenced in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ (or "Christ's self-identification with vulnerable

16 Rothney S. Tshaka, "Black South African Christian Response to Afrophobia in Contemporary South Africa", in *Contesting Post-Racialism Conflicted Churches in the United States and South Africa*, ed. R. Drew Smith, William Ackah, Anthony G. Reddie, and Rothney S. Tshaka (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2015), 130.

neighbors"),[17] and liberation theology. Let us start in the beginning with creation theology or the evangelical theology of immigration.

Although creation theology, with its emphasis on a close reading of the creation story in Genesis as its foundation, is not solely the province of evangelical Christians, it is particularly persuasive for evangelicals as to how they should approach the migrant. I am defining evangelicalism with reference to its definition in "Towards an Hispanic Biblical Theology of Immigration an Independent Evangelical Perspective" by M. Daniel Carroll R. in the book *Immigrant Neighbors among Us*. Carroll writes, "Evangelicalism must be described in a fairly general sense, as it is not confessionally or liturgically homogeneous...[however]...British historian David Babbington identified four shared commitments of the movement."[18] To understand how the creation story informs the normative evangelical response to the migrant, the two most relevant "core elements are...activism (a commitment to proclamation and service), [and] Biblicism (the central place of the Bible for faith and practice)."[19] In this perspective "the supremacy of the Bible to establish a position on any given issue... [includes] present[ing] foundations for an expressly evangelical, biblical theology of immigration"[20] that reflects absolute faith in the story of creation in Genesis and the ontological divide between God and His creation. As Carroll describes it, the Bible makes it clear that we are created in "the image of God" (the imago dei that Roman Catholic and other Christian theologians draw upon) which therefore mandates that we respond in a proscribed way. As we read in Genesis "the climax of...[creation] is the creation of humans in his image (1: 26-30). All persons-male and female, and all ethnicities-are

17 Leopoldo A. Sanchez M., "Who Is My Neighbor? Immigration through Lutheran Eyes", in *Immigrant Neighbors among Us: Immigration Across Theological Traditions*, ed. M. Daniel Carroll R.and Leopoldo A. Sanchez M. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015), 22.

18 M. Daniel Carroll R. , "Towards an Hispanic Biblical Theology of Immigration An Independent Evangelical Perspective ", in I*mmigrant Neighbors among Us: Immigration Across Theological Traditions*, ed. M. Daniel Carroll R.and Leopoldo A. Sanchez M. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015) , 102.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid. 104.

made in the divine image."[21] It follows, then, that we must be obedient to God and treat all of creation as reflections of Him. The immigrant is to be loved and cared for, not persecuted, hunted down, or deported. We are all 'His creatures here below,' His "representatives" on earth, and are all equally of value in God's eyes.

There are two other elements of the creation story that firmly buttress the evangelical perspective of care for the migrant as well. Again, they each reflect a very literal view of the Bible, particularly the command from Genesis 1: 28 to "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." Carroll points out that evangelicals see this passage as "reveal[ing] that migration would characterize human existence and theologically is … connected with the divine plans for the world and humanity... [that] the impulse to migrate is embedded in our very fiber."[22] Even if they are not evangelicals, Christians hold the belief that we are all in a sense migrants, whether one considers our transitory existence on earth as a stage in our journey to the eschaton or in seeing ourselves in Jesus, Mary, and Joseph looking for a place to be safe. It is not only evangelicals who see "human history... [as] the history of migration."[23] God's "involvement in human history" from the Exodus onward is a narrative of migration. But there is one more constituent in the evangelical theology of immigration which has resonance for all Christians. This element, Carroll says, is to be found in Genesis 12:1-3 and is "that, because the people of God receive his blessing, they are to be channels of divine blessing to the rest of humanity."[24] We have an ethical responsibility to be a blessing to the world or as Carroll puts it, using Christopher Wright's concept of paradigm. Wright notes, "This paradigm was designed in part as a means of blessing the world."[25]

This leads us to the doctrine and practice of hospitality to the stranger as another example of the proscribed Christian response to migrants. There are a number of references in the Bible pertaining to hospitality. These include 1 Peter 9, "be hospitable to one another

21 Ibid, 105.
22 Ibid, 106.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid. 107
25 Ibid, 108.

without complaining," Romans 12:13, "Contribute to the needs of the saints, extend hospitality to strangers," and Hebrews 13:2, "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it." In fact, in Hebrew we often encounter the term "ger" which can mean stranger, alien, foreigner or immigrant and we are meant always to be hospitable to ger. In the Old Testament story of Exodus, of course, and in the ancestral memories and spoken narratives of the Jews, there was an awareness that they had been foreigners themselves in Egypt who may have first been treated well but as in so many of the stories we have today, be they in South Africa or the United States, eventually came to be oppressed, reviled, and cruelly exploited. In their practices, such as the Passover Seder, Jews were always reminded not to forget the story of the Exodus. They would hear in Leviticus 19:18, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" and were reminded in Deuteronomy 24: 17-18, "You shall not deprive a resident alien…of justice…Remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore, I command you to do this." How then could God's chosen people fail to provide hospitality to the stranger? But of course, particularly in the Prophets, we read of offenses against the stranger and other marginalized people but with the expectation that God will punish the transgressors.

The way people behaved in Biblical times and how we behave today toward the immigrant are startlingly similar even though now we can read about right action toward the stranger in both the Old and New Testament and in theological treatises since. Apparently, we still can ignore or forget what God is instructing us to do. As Carrol succinctly puts it, "There is a national amnesia regarding the mistreatment of each successive wave of foreigners to this country."[26] As we have seen in this recounting of the story of the treatment of recent immigrants in South Africa, a country where its native blacks were treated horribly, that same amnesia resulted in their violence against black immigrants who came from other African nations to try and make a life for themselves and their families in South Africa. And even though the writings of the Augustinian monk Martin Luther helped foment a new development

26 Ibid, 111.

in the history of Christianity, his sermon on Christmas Day about "the Holy Family's struggle to find a welcoming reception for baby Jesus in Bethlehem [and how] Luther brings the text to life by calling hearers to repentance for failing to reach out to people like Mary and her baby, opening their eyes to see Christ in needy neighbors"[27] seems to have been forgotten as well. Lutheran theology emphasizes Christ's identification with the marginalized, but Lutherans are no less likely than other Christians to forget this. No matter what theological tradition we are rooted in, Christians seem to have been able to overlook Jesus Christ's teachings, including about our call to dedicate ourselves to social justice, which leads us to the discussion of our third and last underpinning of a Christian response to the immigrant, to the marginalized, that of liberation theology.

There have been many interpretations of liberation theology although no one disputes that it originated as a doctrine among Roman Catholic Church leaders in Latin America in the 1950s and 60s. It has been characterized in its broadest sense as a theology espousing the doctrine of freeing all people, particularly the vulnerable and marginalized poor, from oppression. In the glossary of the book *Immigrant Neighbors Among Us*, the editors describe it as "a theological approach... that sees liberation from systemic or institutional oppression (e.g., racial, socio-economic, political) and the practice of a preferential option for the poor as signs in the present that anticipate God's future salvation or coming kingdom."[28] It is thus a theology that both harkens forward to the eschaton and harkens back to the Prophets, particularly to the prophet Amos, who warned that the chosen people themselves would be judged on what the Jews referred to as the Day of the Lord and we Christians have incorporated into our concept of the eschaton. Whether Jewish or Christian, this theology emphasizes that we must treat all people justly, especially the weak, the marginalized, the immigrant, or bear the consequences.

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27 Leopoldo A. Sanchez M., "Who Is My Neighbor? Immigration through Lutheran Eyes", in *Immigrant Neighbors Among Us: Immigration Across Theological Traditions,* ed. M. Daniel Carroll R.and Leopoldo A. Sanchez M. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2015), 24.

28 Carroll R. and Sanchez M., 121.

There is no way, taking all the underpinnings for the Christian response to the migrant, even if we only consider the three discussed in this section, that we can disregard that God is calling us to care for the immigrant. In the next and final section, I am going to turn to an account of steps churches and/or agencies have taken or can take to put the doctrine of care for the immigrant into practice.

A PRACTICAL THEOLOGY OF MIGRATION

As I mentioned in my introduction, last year I bore witness to a ministry of the Anglican Church in South Africa that was responding to one aspect of the harsh conditions faced by immigrants there which was the suffering brought on by the epidemic of HIV/AIDS. Although South Africa is one of the countries in the world with the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS, that disease has much more severely affected the black population than the white. Black Africans living in South Africa have a rate of infection of almost 14 % while less than one half of a percent of whites living in South Africa are infected. It is instructive in our examining steps that can be taken to care for the immigrant to drill down into these statistics to find what the church in South Africa is doing to help. When we see the statistic that almost 14% of black Africans living (my emphasis) in South Africa have HIV/AIDS it is important to note that this statistic includes rates of infection among black African refugees living in South Africa as well as native ones. The indications are that among refugees the rates are higher than among native born blacks and the history of the spread of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa would lend credence to that being the case. The infection rate was historically higher among the people of the countries in Southern Africa that comprise most immigrants to South Africa than the rate in South Africa. The increase in its prevalence within South Africa itself came later. The xenophobic reactions against African immigrants included scapegoating them for the HIV/AIDS epidemic. However, the important point here is that, regardless of the incidence of HIV/AIDS among refugees, its impact on the children of those refugees has been especially cruel. If a child of native parents loses both his and her parents to HIV/AIDS there may be family members who can take them in, but this is not so for most children of immigrants similarly affected. When I was in South Africa

last year, I spent time with the women of the Fikelele AIDS Project of the Anglican Diocese of Cape Town and much of that time was spent in an orphanage they were running for orphans of parents who had died from AIDS. There were a disproportionate number who, from what the people of this project could ascertain, seemed to be the children of black African parents with no roots in South Africa. Here was an example of one step a church was taking in response to the need for care of the most disadvantaged, including immigrant children. Providing direct services whether in South Africa or the United States, as we see in the example of our local agency Jewish Family and Children's Service of Pittsburgh is certainly an impactful step a church or agency can take to care for the immigrant. This is especially the case the more that government withdraws from those services. In Cape Town, the orphanage I visited was caring for orphans placed there by the government who otherwise had nowhere else to place them. In our current political climate, what Jewish Family and Children's Service is doing would not be likely to be done by the federal government or local governments with a long list of other priorities and needs.

Another step a church or agency can take to serve the immigrant is providing shelter at least temporarily. An example of this would be the churches in South Africa which took in black African refugees to protect them during the violent riots that spread throughout that country in the 2008 and again in 2015. And churches can also take on practices that remind the faithful about what the Bible tells us of the story of the migrant as in the story of Mary and Joseph looking for a place to shelter them as Jesus' birth was imminent. Just such a practice is that of the posada that many Hispanic congregations participate in to remind them of that legacy and to honor it. When I participated in a posada in Tucson that a co-worker invited me to, we moved in a procession praying and singing and knocking on doors to 'let us in.' It embodied for me the experience of the Holy Family. What if more Christian churches instituted that practice? Practices reflect beliefs but also shape them and make them real and relevant to us. The point is that Christians cannot profess a belief in the Biblical and theological doctrines that call for us to care for the stranger without engaging in practices that actually do so. That is exactly what is meant by a practical theology of migration.

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SABBATH-KEEPING IS CHILD'S PLAY:
EXPLORING THE SYMBIOSIS OF PLAY AND THE SABBATH

G.D. Jones, Jr.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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ABSTRACT:

This research article considers the encouraging connections between play and Sabbath experiences for the benefit of those seeking alternatives to culturally-mandated overwork and overindulgence inside and outside of church settings. I am grateful to the members of the Th.M. Research Seminar for valuably suggesting the essay's title, and eloquently articulating the successes and failures of its writing in Fall 2016, which new readers will inevitably notice as well. In doing so, the members of the research seminar helped pave the way for my Master's Thesis, *Homo Resumens: Play Theology Unearths the Sabbath*.

THE PROBLEM OF THE FOURTH ANTI-COMMANDMENT

Forget the Sabbath; misplace its holiness.

This is the fourth anti-commandment. It distorts the Sabbath in emphasizing the importance of production and consumption over God's rest. It disregards the Sabbath in forgetting its call to experience God's rest. It disqualifies the Sabbath when it pushes God's rest out of human life.

Why begin a discussion about the Sabbath here? Scholars usually start with Exodus 20:8, "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy."[1] They then create an interpretive framework of right thinking and living based on the fourth commandment. Dr. John Burgess talks about broadening, internalizing, and reversing the fourth commandment in his thorough discussion of the biblical hermeneutic for the Ten Commandments.[2] Other scholars helpfully start with the benefits of the Sabbath, in contrast to the culture that promotes unending production and consumption.[3]

This essay, however, takes a different approach. It agrees with most scholars' ideas that God's fourth commandment allows room for observing the Sabbath in daily life. Yet, many American Christians cannot find a place for the Sabbath in their lives, even if they understand the benefits. This occurs when they attempt to reconcile the idea of the fourth commandment with the reality of their routines. American overtimes and over-commitments distort, disregard, and disqualify biblical interpretations of the Sabbath. When these counter-interpretive methods are applied to the fourth commandment, it creates an opposite idea that represents a modern concealment of the Sabbath in producer/consumer culture, whether by intention or by accident. Therefore, this

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1 All Scripture references are from the NRSV.

2 John P. Burgess, *After Baptism: Shaping the Christian Life* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 43-65.

3 Marva Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1989). Dawn provides a vivid testimony of the Sabbath's aesthetic benefits. Walter Brueggemann, *Sabbath as Resistance: Saying No to the Culture of Now* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014). Brueggemann outlines the political aspects of Sabbath-keeping. Wayne Muller, *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives* (New York: Bantam Books, 1999). Muller offers therapeutic Sabbath benefits for the mind, body, and soul.

discussion starts with the anti-commandment, because this is the problem to solve. Modern American Christians are trying to recover a Sabbath obscured by the overemphasis given to producing and consuming. To address the problematic aspects of an unchallenged modern work ethic and a human need for the Sabbath, this essay asserts that the experience of play momentarily overcomes the fourth anti-commandment's prevalence in modern life and uncovers human openness to the Fourth Commandment. Put another way, Sabbath-keeping is not big business; Sabbath-keeping is child's play.

MODERN AMERICANS NEED SOMETHING BEYOND OVERWORK AND OVERINDULGENCE

Sure, God ordained humans to produce and consume. Genesis 2:15 teaches us, "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." Production and consumption are not bad things by themselves, especially when they are oriented toward guiding people back to God. The problem comes when these aspects of modern life degenerate into the extremes of overwork and overindulgence, and enable inhumane systems of exploitation for excessive profits.

Consider the Dodge Ram Trucks' "Farmer" commercial that aired in 2013, during Super Bowl XLVII. The ad is imaginatively narrated with a speech that Paul Harvey gave to the Future Farmers Convention. Harvey imaginatively continues the Genesis Creation account to the eighth day, when the farmer is created. The farmer is presented as the embodiment of virtuous labor when Harvey intones:

> God said, "I need somebody willing to get up before dawn, milk cows, work all day in the fields, milk cows again, eat supper, then go to town and stay past midnight at a meeting of the school board" — so God made a Farmer.[4]

In this vision, Ram trucks accompany beautiful farm horses, iconic landscapes, and farmers working and reflecting upon life, to drive the point home. The worth and virtue of the farmer is driven more by what

4 "Official Ram Trucks Super Bowl Commercial 'Farmer,'" YouTube video, 2:02, posted by "Ram Trucks," February 3, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AMpZ0TGjbWE.

he or she does and produces, and less by who he or she is. This production even drives God's creation of the farmer! It subliminally suggests that farmers can't really do what God "needs" them to do — produce over long hours — unless they buy Ram trucks. Here, the virtue of farming is manipulated to sell a product for corporate profit. These aspects of production and consumption are not bad things in themselves. Still, these practices alone cannot help Americans recover an understanding of the Sabbath, because they are often manipulated to obscure the Sabbath for material profit. Americans need a different activity that balances the virtue of hard work with the enjoyment of God's rest.

PASTORAL APPLICATION: INTERRUPTING OVERWORK AND OVERINDULGENCE WITH PLAY

A biblio-theological understanding of play, rather than labor, can help minsters serve their congregations by recovering ideas of living out the Sabbath in everyday life. Play interrupts routine living. Play-time offers a framework for translating the Westminster Confession's instructions to depend on God, glorify God, and enjoy Him forever into modern Sabbath-keeping.[5] This theological understanding of play reintroduces and revitalizes the practice of Sabbath for today's American Christians in a way that stays faithful to its Jewish foundation. This essay draws connections between Sabbath and play where other scholars notice distinctions. Let's start by exploring two definitions.

DEFINING PLAY: THE HUIZINGA

When trying to define play, scholars usually make three moves: they doubt it can actually be done, they cite Johan Huizinga, and they adapt his definition. Play scholars champion his definition as a "super-explanation" of play. Thus, rather than teaching us the Nietzschian

5 WC 7.001; 7.111

"superman" that denies "otherworldly hopes,"[6]—they teach us The Huizinga:

> Summing up the formal characteristics of play we might call it a free activity standing quite consciously outside "ordinary" life as being "not serious," but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their difference from the common world by disguises or other means.[7]

The Huizinga definitely leaps tall buildings of meaning in a single bound. Yet, like the Superman of DC Comics fame, this definition of play lends itself to be imitated. Roger Caillois's Huizinga becomes a revolutionary activity of freedom within political contexts.[8] Robert E. Neale's version shows how play creates psychological harmony.[9] Jurgen Möltmann considers how a political Huizinga makes room for play in a world of suffering.[10] Robert K. Johnston illustrates a work-play balance Huizinga in evangelical practice.[11] Kirk Bryon Jones's model features playful cooperation with God in discerning and living out God's

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6 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None* (Modern Library Edition), trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1995), 13. Here, Nietzsche provides a contrary viewpoint, when he writes, "behold, I teach you the overman. The overman is the meaning of the earth . . . do not believe those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes! Poison-mixers are they, whether they know it or not." This is my playful subversion of Nietzsche's claim. Play scholars insist that the meaning of the earth is found in play, perhaps, even the "playman" or "playperson."

7 Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950), 13.

8 Roger Caillois, *Man and the Sacred*, trans. Meyer Barash (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1959).

9 Robert E. Neale, *In Praise of Play: Toward a Psychology of Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

10 Jurgen Möltmann, *Theology of Play*, trans. Reinhard Ulrich (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

11 Robert K. Johnston, *The Christian at Play* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1983).

call.[12] James H. Evans's Huizinga is a way of making a livable world for African-Americans living in a repressive country.[13] Craig Detweiler imagines a video game Huizinga that immerses players in digital worlds and communities.[14] Courtney Goto builds a pedagogical version that emerges out of a Japanese-American experience it simultaneously affirms.[15] Clearly, this conversation emerges out of Huizinga's definition of play and adapts it for new contexts.

Joining this long line of thought, I value Huizinga's framework for allowing new expressions of the experience of play, which eludes being pinned down by one specific definition. His framework is appropriately and necessarily playful; it sets a playground for play. I agree with Huizinga when I say that play's key characteristics are freedom and difference from the stagnancy and anxiety of modern living. However, scholars who came after Huizinga were right to emphasize that play is not separate from daily living; play occurs within daily life. It should be argued that the theological value of play is not found in its ability to take us away from the hard things in life. Rather, a theology of play helps us digest life's difficulties by recreating our identity, purpose, and actions within these realities. Those who play are taking moments to say "no" to a stagnancy and anxiety rooted in our inevitably broken humanity, while saying "yes" to the flourishing and delight rooted in the unexpected recreation of human life.

Contemporary Christians should theologically extend Huizinga's idea of playing toward reorienting ourselves and our communities toward the Sabbath. This theology of play shows us how to step outside the overworked American life that enables the social commodification, political victimization, and economic exploitation of each citizen. An

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12 Kirk Byron Jones, *Holy Play: The Joyful Adventure of Unleashing Your Divine Purpose* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007).

13 James H. Evans, Jr., *Playing: Christian Exploration of Daily Living* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010).

14 Craig Detweiler, *Halos and Avatars: Playing Video Games with God* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010).

15 Courtney T. Goto, *The Grace of Playing: Pedagogies for Leaning into God's New Creation* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2016). Goto draws heavily from child psychologist D.W. Winnicott, whose definition of the "play-space" has striking similarities to Johann Huizinga.

ABC News article tells this tale when it examines the 2015 Bureau of Labor Statistics report on the lives of 25 million Americans.[16] Play-moments interrupt these routines and reorient humans back towards eternity.

Eternity touches humanity when God begins, sustains, and renews people in their everyday living. Play is activity that translates the human experience of eternity through our senses. Play points beyond earthly activity toward the reality of another realm rooted in eternity. As such, it is closely related to freedom, delight, otherworldliness, vivaciousness, and non-anxiety. Play helps modern Americans recover understandings of Sabbath-time.

DEFINING SABBATH: EVERYDAY I'M HESCHELING

In view of this depiction of play, we can now join the scholarly conversation about defining the Sabbath. Scholars typically make three moves to explain Sabbath: they talk about stopping work as instructed by the fourth commandment (as discussed above); they quote Abraham Heschel — one of the leading Jewish theologians of the twentieth century; and they give instructions for how to live it out in their own context.

At first, ideas about stopping work sound ridiculous to modern Americans who embrace the non-stop work ethic. This lifestyle runs deep through the nation's history. It is influenced by many things, from John Wesley shaping generations of Methodist preachers with *The Use of Money* sermon, to Rick Ross's single that revolutionized mid-2000 southern hip-hop featuring the memorable hook, "Everyday I'm hustlin'." Though both examples do not fully capture the voice of America, but they are vivid expressions of what influences American thought.

Drawing from Luke 16:9, Wesley preaches good stewardship of money through hard work. His intent is to not waste money by "[throwing] the precious talent into the sea," but instead "Having, first, gained all you can, and, secondly saved all you can . . . [giving] all

16 Dean Schabner, "Americans Work More Than Anyone," ABC News, May 1, 2016, http://abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=93364&page=1.

you can."[17] Wesley teaches his audience to work hard to earn as much money as possible in order to give it to those in need. However, he warns his audience not to damage themselves or others in the process. Meanwhile, Rick Ross raps his profane, yet highly-embraced work ethic, "We never steal cars, but we deal hard."[18] Ross implies that stealing cars is morally wrong, while the "hard work" of "dealing" in order to earn enough money to buy a car is honorable. Here, it is important to consider Methodist sensibilities, and not offend anyone with careless language. These two men do not stand for the same things. John Wesley and the Methodists of his era would not endorse "Hustlin,'" and neither do modern Christians. This distinction is essential to reach the point of this striking comparison. When a nineteenth century sermon and a twenty-first century rap song both express a notion of moral superiority that comes from working hard for money, one sees the wide range of the American work ethic's influence in religious and secular contexts.

Max Weber considers the pervasiveness of this work ethic in a critique of American religion. He claims that it emerged out of a Puritan understanding of God's call for human life. However, humanity's voluntary response was subverted in the name of material profit. Weber concludes:

> The Puritan wanted to work in calling; we are forced to do so. For when asceticism was carried out of monastic cells into everyday life, and began to dominate worldly morality, it did its part in building the tremendous cosmos of the modern economic order . . . the care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the 'saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment.' But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage.[19]

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17 John Wesley, "The Use of Money," in Sermons on Several Occasions (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), III. 1, https://www.ccel.org/print/wesley/sermons/v.l.

18 "Rick Ross – Hustlin' Lyrics." Genius Lyrics, last modified November 7, 2016. http://genius.com/Rick-ross-hustlin-lyrics.

19 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Stephen Kalberg (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 108.

It is important to note that Weber's intent is to link Protestantism to an out-of-control work ethic. However, he weakens his own claim, when he blames ancient monks for broken capitalism. The current overemphasis on work results from mishandling, not adhering to, ancient asceticism. On the other hand, when Sabbath scholars talk about stopping work, they affirm God's mastery of work, and reject how labor dictates modern life.

In our world which highly values work, Sabbath scholars often build their case from Abraham Heschel's eloquent description of the Sabbath. He shows us the difference between hustling and "Hescheling" when he writes:

> The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to holiness in time. It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.[20]

"Hescheling" describes a recovery of the delight and freedom of the Sabbath that diverse scholars adapt in their own ways. Tilden Edwards's spiritual discipline "Hescheling" draws on Jewish, Puritan, and Contemplative heritages.[21] Marva Dawn's relational "Hescheling" centers on using time to be with God and others.[22] Walter Brueggemann's political "Hescheling" is both a resistance and alternative to religious and economic demands to produce.[23] Karl Bailey's statistical "Hescheling" empirically shows how communal Sabbath-keeping fosters an individual's sense of relatedness, competence, and autonomy.[24] William Schumacher's faithful witness "Hescheling" affirms that God intends for

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20 Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 10.

21 Tilden Edwards, "The Christian Sabbath: Its Promise Today as a Basic Spiritual Discipline." *Worship* 56, no. 1 (January 1982): 2-15.

22 Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*.

23 Brueggemann, *Sabbath as Resistance*.

24 Karl Bailey and Arian Timoti. "Delight Or Distraction: An Exploratory Analysis of Sabbath-Keeping Internalization." *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 43, no. 3 (2015): 192-203.

work and rest to be enfolded in His rhythm for life.[25] Kara Root's ecclesial "Hescheling" involves her congregation choosing not to hold Sunday services twice a month.[26] Frank Rees is "Hescheling" beyond expected spaces to show how "the divine breath" of the Sabbath is moving away from institutional expectations and into counter-cultural discipleship.[27] Michael Rogness is "Hescheling" beyond expected times, to show how Sabbath happens any time people connect themselves to their families, believers and disciples throughout history, Jesus, and God in the Genesis Creation account.[28] Clearly, these scholars are "Hescheling" in new contexts.

Joining this conversation, I value Heschel's definition for his focus on holy time. The Jewish concept of holy time provides a philosophical and theological base for believers seeking an alternative to voices such as Plato and Aristotle, who influenced authoritative Christian individuals throughout history.[29] I accept Heschel's Sabbath-invitation, because it puts less value on what creation does and more on what creation is. However, I do not share his negativity about the realm of space. Where Heschel sees "tyranny," I see a system of brokenness that hinders humanity that is waiting to be redeemed. Sabbath scholars are right to adapt Heschel's definition in ways where Sabbath-time reveals the stagnancy of earthly routines and reorients people back toward the flourishing flow of God's rhythm. Sabbath-keeping, like playing, is when believers

25 William W. Schumacher, "Faithful Witness in Work and Rest." *Concordia Journal* 41, no. 2 (2015): 136-150.

26 Kara Root, "Sabbath: The Gift of Rest." *Word & World* 36, no. 3 (2016): 267-275.

27 Frank D. Rees, "New Directions in Australian Spirituality: Sabbath Beyond the Church." *Colloquium* 47, no.1 (2015): 75-88.

28 Michael Rogness, "The Sabbath: Holy Time." *Word & World* 36, no. 3 (2016): 285-291.

29 Augustine, *Confessions and Enchiridion*, ed. Albert C. Outler (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 90, accessed July 7, 2018, http://catholicprayerrevival.com/downloadpage_files/AugustineConfessions.pdf. In Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 7.1.1-2, the Neoplatonic idea of God's nonmaterial nature is advanced. Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1942), accessed July 7, 2018, http://www.newadvent.org/summa/. In Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Book 1.Q2.A3, the Aristotelian concept of the "First Mover" provides a philosophical structure for Aquinas to develop his argument of the "Unmoved Mover."

intentionally take moments to reject practices that root cultures in the stagnancy and anxiety of human production and consumption, in order to embrace free and delightful disciplines of rest rooted in God's activity.

CONNECTING PLAY AND SABBATH

Studying play and Sabbath together creates a symbiotic conversation. In modern America, play activity unties Sabbath theology from compulsive production. Likewise, Sabbath theology grounds play activity, not in irresponsible leisure, but in an imitation of God's creative rest. This symbiosis unfolds in three claims about delight, and four claims about freedom. The delight of play and Sabbath features a new time, space, and identity that connects participants to God's presence. The new time transforms earthly experience through new space. The new space generates new identities. Out of this God-given delight, freedom emerges through new rules, activity, life, and destiny. The new rules overtake what is taken for granted. This results in new activities that forge a new life within earthly life. Boundaries of possibility are extended into a new destiny for humanity which is different than unending production, compulsive consumption, and irresponsible leisure. The following sections unpack these connections.

A. NEW TIME: WHEN GOD'S ETERNALITY INSPIRES DELIGHT

Play and Sabbath scholars agree that a new perception of time arises out of the total physical, mental, and emotional involvement in an activity. Every child and everyone who has ever played already understands this on an intuitive level. George Sheehan describes this "obvious" theological truth when he talks about running. Sheehan reflects:

> There are times . . . I come home from running a race in Central Park, when I don't know who won or where I finished or what time I ran. My family wonders then why I went. Why I spent the day coming and going and endured that cruel hour on those rolling hills. I have no logical answer. I simply know that for that hour I was whole and true and living at the top of my powers. That hour was life intensified.[30]

Robert K. Johnston sees the theological value of Sheehan's play. Johnston concludes:

> A person engages in play for its own sake but it can have multiple benefits: (1) a continuing sense of delight or joy, (2) an affirmation of one's united self, (3) the creation of common bonds with one's world, (4) the emancipation of one's spirit so that it moves outward toward the sacred, and (5) the relativization of one's workaday world.[31]

Johnston compels when he concludes that the benefits of play involve transcending ordinary life, because play is an alternative and resistance to the destructive part of routine living. Johnston and other play theorists say that the play activity itself, because of the quality of its time, is precisely what allows access into this new dimension. However, escapists intentionally misconstrue this notion. It is important to emphasize that new time does not bypass real life; it is a new dimension within established reality. Therefore, play is not about creating timelessness, but receiving the "timefulness" of God's divine reality in earthly existence.

Abraham Heschel also reminds us that Sabbath's meaning is found in holy time. He writes, "We must not forget that it is not a thing that lends significance to a moment; it is the moment that lends significance to things."[32] Here, he distinguishes the realm of time from the realm of space. Yet, the holiness of Sabbath-time affects earthly experience. Heschel begins to unpack this claim by recalling that God makes time holy before anything else. Drawing from Genesis 2:2-3, he teaches that "The sanctity of time came first, the sanctity of man came second, and the sanctity of space last. Time was hallowed by God; space, the Tabernacle,

30 George Sheehan, "Play," *American Way*, July 1977, 33.
31 Johnston, 44.
32 Heschel, 6.

was consecrated by Moses."[33] For Heschel, the holiness of Sabbath-time initiates the holiness of humanity and everything else. From here, the Tabernacle is made holy, because God appointed Moses to consecrate that space. Ultimately, Moses's holiness and the Tabernacle's holiness are both rooted in the holy time created by the holy God. Sabbath expresses how eternity touches finitude as a heavenly dimension that is distinct, yet not detached, from the earthly realm.

Heschel's Sabbath-time envelops earthly space. He muses, "The boundless continuous but vacuous entity which realistically is called space is not the ultimate form of reality. Our world is a world of space moving through time—from the Beginning to the End of Days."[34] He teaches that God begins Creation and renews the broken universe in the same time-dimension. Heschel's explicit claims about time help to clarify Christian notions of God's time. Christian history also emerges out God's creation time, proceeds through eras of revelation, and is fulfilled in God's future renewal. This story is not bound by space and occurs in a unified understanding of time. All history unfolds out of God's ever-present eternality.

Heschel resists the idea that timelessness negates the flow of ordinary time when he emphasizes the holy time that is present in all spaces. Heschel's thought, however, extends further. Sabbath-time connects humanity to the "day" that includes God's creating and completing Creation. This day involves eternity, God's promises, and humanity's response. Heschel explains, "God has sanctified the day, and man must again and again sanctify the day, illumine the day with the light of his soul."[35] In other words, people can relive this creating-completing day in seemingly unspectacular, yet enlivening moments in daily life, such as George Sheehan's memories of running. Both Johnston and Sheehan connect the theological speculation of Sabbath-time's delight to down-to-earth experience through the language of play.

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33 Ibid., 10.

34 Ibid., 97.

35 Ibid., 54. This is reminiscent of Psalm 118:24: "This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

B. NEW SPACE: WHERE GOD'S ETERNALITY INSPIRES DELIGHT

Heschel emphasizes that Sabbath-time is the basis for living the life God intended within earthly space. He explains, "This is the task of men: to conquer space and sanctify time. We must conquer space in order to sanctify time."[36] Both Sabbath and play involve ways of mastering space to open up access to divine experiences.

James H. Evans, Jr. describes how play creates a three-layered space for the oppressed. He suggests that play is connected to "the attempt to construct a livable world in which realities of race and racism continue to hold sway."[37] Evans is speaking to and from an African-American church context. He describes this new space of play as located "in the interstices between freedom and structure, between the subject(ive) and object(ive), between creation and imitation."[38] In the first layer, play opens up a space to freely enjoy and delight in the experience of living and being one's true self, even though a person may live in a culture that restricts expressions of his or her joy and identity. In the second layer, play is a space between people embracing the world as it is and people rising above their earthly experiences. In the third layer, play is where people imitate God's creativity and renewal in earthly experience. Here, Evans allows his playful baby grandson, Christian, to teach a vivid lesson:

> One of Christian's favorite toys is a box with pop-up heads, and the objective is to pound the heads with a toy hammer. As he grips the hammer, I am reminded that for him the hammer, designed as an instrument of work, has become something else altogether. It is tempting to think of play as the opposite of work, but this is not necessarily the case. As I watch Christian wielding the hammer with near complete abandon, it occurs to me that play is not the opposite of work; play is work without anxiety.[39]

Christian the hammerer, like George Sheehan the runner, is living life whole, true, and at the top of his powers in the new space of play! This is Sabbath-time's mastery over earthly space.

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36 Ibid., 101.
37 Evans Jr., 18.
38 Ibid., 11.
39 Ibid., xiv.

C. NEW PEOPLE: IDENTITIES THROUGH WHICH GOD'S ETERNALITY INSPIRES DELIGHT

Play helps to recover the idea of Sabbath's new time and space interrupting people's routine lives with the essence of God. A person who is touched by eternity is recreated into someone who emerges out of God's Creation intentions and depends upon God's ultimate fulfillment. This is a new person, because she or he is now evaluated by God's rest, rather than their human activity. God's rest on the seventh day is not a pause. Actually, it involves God's creative activity of establishing rest. Heschel unpacks this idea by describing menuha:

> 'What was created on the seventh day? *Tranquility, serenity, peace and repose.*' To the biblical mind *menuha* is the same as happiness and stillness, as peace and harmony. The word with which Job described the state after life he was longing for is derived from the same root as *menuha*. It is the state of life wherein man lies still, wherein the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest . . . In later times, *menuha* became a synonym for the life in the world to come, for eternal life.[40]

Heschel's description of *menuha* frames Creation as something that God begins and completes by creating a holy time of holy rest, not production. New people are imitators of this rest.

Walter Brueggemann illustrates this idea of new people by describing how slaves in Egypt became God's children in the Exodus story. In his understanding, Pharaoh represents the mechanical processes of endless production and consumption ruling over human life. In contrast, "Sabbath becomes a decisive, concrete, visible way of opting for and aligning with the God of rest."[41] Thus, when God delivers the Hebrews out of Egypt, they are no longer slaves who are only as valuable as the bricks they make; they are Israelites who God has lovingly recreated as His own children, within the promise of His rest from wicked oppressors.

Andrew McAlpine's time with the rhythm-based video game *Guitar Hero* offers real-life insight into the biblio-theological notion of the Sabbath identity. This game turns a player into a superstar by allowing

40 Heschel, 22-23.

41 Brueggemann, 10.

him or her to master the game of following along with famous rock songs on a guitar controller and customizing their in-game appearance. This imitative playing is a way of understanding what Heschel suggests by imitating God's creative rest. McAlpine admits, "When you're mashing those buttons it feels less like you're following along with the song than that you are actually playing the song."[42] This customization of an in-game character is a modern illustration of what Brueggemann describes about the Exodus transformation. McAlpine confesses, "No matter how hard I tried, the game would not allow the virtual me to have the same, uh, gamer's physique that I have in real life . . . I was stuck in a nicer body, with nicer clothes."[43] When players actually become the *Guitar Hero*, it is a light introduction into new personhood. McAlpine concludes, "We get to be people we don't have the guts (or the money, or the social wherewithal) to be in real life."[44] McAlpine's play-time with *Guitar Hero* translates the delightful immersion into new personhood in a way that engages modern sensibilities.

D. NEW RULES: DELIGHT DESPITE LOSING WINS FREEDOM

When a person assumes a new identity in play, they adhere to the "fixed rules" and "orderly manner" described by Huizinga.[45] Play is not chaos; it replaces the order of one realm with guidelines from another. Michael Novak translates this abstract assertion through the everyday play of children. He teaches, "Observe toddlers at play, how they establish rules. 'This is water. This is land. You can't step on those . . ..' The spirit of play is the invention of rules . . .. the description of a fixed universe is the first and indispensable step of every free act."[46] Novak is right to attach new rules to free acts. However, rules in the spirit of play must be translated into a culture dominated by the spirit of work. Thus, someone who plays is someone who accepts new standards amid

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42 Andrew McAlpine, "Poets, Posers, and Guitar Heroes" in *Halos and Avatars: Playing Video Games with God*, ed. Craig Detweiler (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 123.

43 Ibid., 125.

44 Ibid.

45 Huizinga, 13.

46 Michael Novak, *Joy of Sports*, Revised: Endzones, Bases, Baskets, Balls, and the Consecration of the American Spirit (Oxford: Madison Books, 1993), 232.

existing regulations. The new standards generated through play and games remind Christians that keeping the Sabbath involves voluntarily embracing a rulebook that confronts social rules and transforms cultural experience.

The prevailing modern American rule commands people to produce and consume. This sounds like DJ Khaled's 2010 anthem, "All I do is win, win, win — no matter what!"[47] If play translates the Sabbath's interruption of modern rules into everyday ideas, it says that this drive to win is replaced by something else. David L. Miller begins to describe this alternative life by considering the etymologies of "winning" and "losing." Miller investigates the meaning of winning and concludes, "In short, to say 'I can't win' is precisely to say, however unconsciously, 'I am presently in the process of struggling, desiring—yes, even winning."[48] Miller makes a persuasive point; winning is a sensibility that is always pursued, but never fully grasped. The desire itself enables a self-perpetuating cycle of human oppression bent on achieving an unattainable ideal. Miller also looks at the word origins of losing. He contends that a "loser," is one who is "loosed, freed, and detached. From what? From winning, of course; from struggling and desiring. To lose, though we scarcely admit it to ourselves, is precisely to win; it is to win what we want to win when we say, 'I can't win.'"[49] Here, Miller's playful language inserts the experience of the Sabbath into the culture that views winning as the ultimate goal.

The new rule of the Sabbath supplants the compulsion to win by giving Christians the opportunity to play the game even through losing. When Christians come to the end of their own efforts, they realize that they cannot master their own lives. This is a hard truth to accept, until one remembers that God immeasurably establishes a person's value. God claims every human life as His own, whether a person wins or loses.[50] In light of God's valuation, life expands beyond just what humans are

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47 "All I Do Is Win (Remix)," YouTube video, 3:47, posted by "DJ Khaled," March 9, 2012, https://youtu.be/LdE3WlQ__GY.

48 David L. Miller, "Playing the Game to Lose" in *Theology of Play*, Jurgen Möltmann, trans. Reinhard Ulrich (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 106.

49 Ibid.

50 Burgess, 4.

able to do, and incorporates what humans are invited to be — children of God. Losing in the win-culture is an expression of the Christian freedom to live in the joy, delight, and freedom of God's mastery of earthly life. These are the new guidelines that do not seek to win through dominating others, but rather, by delighting in God and sharing His freedom with others.

Brueggemann describes how the new rules of the Sabbath extend God's delight and freedom into modern America. He draws from Exodus 20:8-11 to set forth the Sabbath rule for Christians: "Rest as did the creator God! And while you rest, be sure that your neighbors rest alongside you. Indeed, sponsor a *system of rest* that contradicts the *system of anxiety* of Pharaoh, because you are no longer subject to Pharaoh's anxiety system."[51] If Christians agree to these rules, then the theological understanding of losing helps them to define Sabbath activity in win-culture terms. Resting is embracing God's winning, amid human outcomes. Making sure our neighbors rest helps them to live in God's victory, even if a surrounding culture suspects it is a losing strategy. Sponsoring the system of rest means physically, intellectually, and spiritually affirming human value and validation in God, rather than trying to dominate others in the name of winning. Freedom from who human standards might hold as the ultimate winner, Pharaoh, is a lifestyle that does not demand a high level of production and consumption to solely dictate the value and security of human life. Here, the delight of play relativizes routine expectations and reintroduces Sabbath guidelines into American life.

E. NEW ACTIVITY: STOPPING IN ORDER TO START ENGAGING GOD AND OTHERS

Some may read the preceding section and think that the modern American Christian experience is a lifestyle of losing. Thankfully, new activity is not about failure and rationalizing underachievement. Rather, the new rules are guidelines that free people to see, touch, hear, smell, and taste God's victory. New activities are rehearsals of winning through life-affirming disciplines that connect people to God and our

51 Brueggemann, 30.

neighbor. Sabbath undertakings interrupt the routines rooted in human competition that deaden our affections for God and others.

Marva Dawn describes the blessings found in the Sabbath rituals of ceasing, resting, embracing, and feasting in sensory terms. She lights candles at the start and finish of Sabbath, greets angels, offers prayers of thanksgiving, takes hikes through nature, and feasts with friends.[52] Yet, she best portrays this sensory interaction when she talks about a Sabbath-day walk through a field and seeing the balls of cotton on milkweed. Dawn recalls:

> I was overcome by a great longing for their softness—softness that is largely shut out by our technological society and by the scholarly world . . . I culled the cloudy fibers from several pods by the roadside and held them against my face for a few miles as I walked . . . I realized that the source of such longing lies in my human yearning for God. That awareness, in turn, led me to think about how God is soft — tender, compassionate, forgiving, healing, providing, comforting, nursing — and how I could in my own peculiar ways imitate his softness.[53]

Walking a few miles in Marva Dawn's shoes, Christians have a starting point for appreciating the somatic blessing of Sabbath activity. This perspective is a counterpoint to religious Platonic traditions that are wary of bodily and emotional human life.

Meanwhile, Kutter Callaway finds a similar affirmation of somatic experience in play activity. For him, playing the Nintendo Wii with engaged bodily movement, rather than the detached button-mashing of a controller, holds theological value. Callaway claims, "The simplicity of the Wii's player activity does not leave players feeling incapable or obtuse, but engaged, and at times, accomplished. Thus, there is an affective or emotional dimension to the Wii experience."[54] Callaway's play resonates with what Dawn insisted about her Sabbath-walk; new activity enlivens people in the full-body acting out of an otherworldly

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52 Dawn, 212-213.

53 Ibid., 46-47.

54 Kutter Callaway, "Wii Are Inspirited" in *Halos and Avatars: Playing Video Games with God*, ed. Craig Detweiler (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 83.

life. He sees a connection to 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Believers see their body, individually and corporately, as "a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God," and respond by "glorifying God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:20). In Wii-playing, Callaway describes the Sabbath foretaste of the somatic, holistic, and affective engagement that the workaday world closes off. Understandably, sincere thinkers might dismiss such claims as over-thinking an activity that is designed to be irrelevant and irreverent. Such skepticism should be measured against the tendency for video game experiences to foster hope and bonds between gamers, such as in the formation of retrogame communities. Entertaining both endorsement and skepticism, play helps Christians to see Sabbath-keeping as engaging with God and others in life-affirming ways.

F. NEW LIFE: PLAYING OUT ETERNITY

In *Man, Play, and Games*, Roger Caillois draws on Huizinga to describe four game forms that engage people in playing. Agon involves the all-consuming competition of major sports, alea names the engrossing game of chance in gambling, mimicry anticipates the captivating simulation of video games, and ilinx is the fascinating suspension of senses that happens in virtual reality.[55] Caillois's description of these engaging game forms also describe how the delight and freedom of Sabbath-keeping engages today's Christians in new life. Sabbath-keeping is agonian, because it engages today's Christians by "competing" with society's compulsions. The new life is Christians winning by participating in God's creative rest and extending it to their neighbors. Sabbath-keeping is alean, because it engages today's church through high-cost and socially-risky activities. Karl Bailey's study empirically demonstrates this gambling in two ways. It pits the social losses that come with rejecting the cultural compulsion to win against the spiritual and relational gains that accompany communal Sabbath-keeping.[56] Sabbath-keeping is mimicrian, because it engages contemporary believers through the imitation of God's activity. It is an obedient replaying of God's establishment of rest in the beginning

55 Roger Caillois, *Man, Play, and Games*, trans. Meyer Barash (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 12.

56 Bailey, 192.

of Creation. It also is a trusting recreation of the tranquil stillness of the future life in eternity. Sabbath-keeping is ilinxian when the feeling of eternity dizzies the habitual perceptions of modern disciples and reorients their sensibilities back toward God. This taste of God on earth trains Christians to depend upon, glorify, and enjoy God in eternity.

G. NEW DESTINY: ITE ET LUDITE[57]

Modern Christian culture considers training as a child's trajectory to maturity. Churches guide children along this path. They teach children things, such as the Ten Commandments, to help them be what God created them to be, which is often thought to be mature people called "adults." Adults are people who know that the fourth commandment says, "remember the Sabbath and keep it holy." However, adults are expected to live out the fourth anti-commandment, by forgetting the Sabbath in order to compulsively produce and consume for the sake of dominating creation. This incongruity casts doubt on human ideas about who, or what, is mature, because it prevents adults from being who God created them to be. God did not create humanity to destructively dominate; He created people to inherit His kingdom. Jesus talks about the people who inherit God's kingdom in Luke 18:16: "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs." Christ teaches that children and the childlike, rather than the childish, are the ones who have the capacity to taste eternity. Playing is an everyday way of being childlike in Sabbath-keeping. When adults depend upon, glorify, and enjoy God, they can take part in the Zechariah 8:5 promise of eternity as a place "full of boys and girls playing in its streets," without abandoning their maturity or responsibilities.

57 Hugo Rahner, *Man At Play* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 64. Hugo Rahner uses the Latin-phrase, "Go forth and play" to characterize the religious destiny to become childlike in eternal life.

CONCLUSION

Moments of playtime open modern sensibilities toward interrupting modern time with Sabbath-time. When the American schedule commands an overworked anxiousness, Sabbath-time offers a delightful rest. When the American work ethic commodifies identity, Sabbath-time nourishes one's God-given identity. Hustling is about competing; "Hescheling" creates common bonds among neighbors. The work clock pushes people toward mechanical processes; Sabbath-time reorients humanity towards God's rhythm. Routine overtime expresses work's stronghold on modern life; Sabbath-time expresses God's ultimate claim upon humanity. Play helps modern Christians to interrupt the fourth anti-commandment's prevalence in modern life, and uncover their openness to the Fourth Commandment and its continual invitation:

Remember the Sabbath; keep it holy.

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A Century after the Bolshevik Revolution: What Kind of Kingdom?

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INTRODUCTION

"We still think of ourselves as an imperial people," a Russian acquaintance recently confided to me. Perhaps that is inevitable for a country that spans eleven time zones from the Baltic Sea to the Pacific Ocean and unites several hundred ethnic and language groups. American academics and politicians cringed at President Putin's declaration in 2005 that the dissolution of the Soviet Union had been the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the twentieth century, but as another Russian acquaintance told me wistfully, "Until the revolution on the Maidan, I would spend every summer in Ukraine, and I felt completely at home. We used to be one people." Even Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Mikhail Gorbachev saw Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus as one civilization.[1]

1 See Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *Rebuilding Russia*, trans. Alexis Klimoff (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1991), 14-19; and William Taubman, *Gorbachev: His Life and Times* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2017), 628-630.

Russia today may not be the great empire that it once was, but President Putin has deeply understood that, after more than a century of political and social chaos, asserting empire gives Russians a renewed sense of pride and identity. Russians are not entirely happy with the way he runs the country—not only political dissidents have protested in recent days, but also long-haul truck drivers who feel unfairly taxed and Moscow apartment owners who resent redevelopment efforts that benefit the country's oligarchs more than them—but Putin retains sky-high approval ratings because he has made Russia an important player on the global stage again.

The Orthodox Church has also understood Russians' longing for empire. The massive building projects of the past two decades—thousands of churches and hundreds of monasteries—have been not only about restoring religious life after seven decades of atheistic communism, but also about giving Russians a story of national greatness that reaches back more than one thousand years. To be sure, the Orthodox way of telling Russia's story is only one possibility, and we cannot be certain how many Russians pay attention to it. The Orthodox story has nevertheless resonated deeply with President Putin and the religious leaders who support him. Those of us who care about Russia and its future are once again haunted by Pilate's question to Jesus: "So, you are a king?" (John 18:37). The relation of religion and empire has become the burning theological question for the new Russia.

TELLING THE STORY

One version of the Orthodox story that circulates in Russia today goes like this: In the tenth century, Rus' emerged as the first great empire of the Eastern Slavic peoples. Seeking to determine which religion would be best for his people and most advantageous for him politically, its pagan ruler, Prince Vladimir, sent emissaries to neighboring lands to investigate. Aspects of Catholicism, Judaism, and Islam interested him, but it was the religion of Constantinople that impressed him the most. As they described Orthodox worship in the church of Hagia Sophia, Vladimir's emissaries declared, "We no longer knew whether we were on earth or in heaven." In 988, Vladimir accepted baptism in Chersonesos,

an ancient Greek city on the Crimean Peninsula.[2] When he returned to Kiev, his capital city, he ordered his people baptized en masse in the Dnieper River—a nineteenth-century bronze statue of the prince holding a massive cross now towers from the hillside above.

Kirill, patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church since 2009, has described Vladimir not simply as expressing a religious or political preference but also as making a "civilizational choice." According to the patriarch, Christianization enabled Russia to create its own civilization independent of external forces: "Prince Vladimir's choice was by no means only European nor even only Byzantine . . . It was a Russian choice that enabled the people to use their gifts and talents in Christianity and create their own civilization."[3] The Christian values that Vladimir and his people embraced gave them a unique identity. As one Orthodox author has recently declared, "It is difficult to overestimate the deep spiritual transformation of the Russian people effected by [Prince Vladimir] . . . in every aspect of its life and world-view. In the pure Kievan waters, as in a 'bath of regeneration,' there was realized a sacramental transfiguration of the Russian spiritual element, the spiritual birth of the nation, called by God to unforeseen deeds of Christian service to mankind."[4]

In this way of telling the story, Orthodoxy decisively shaped Russia's great cultural achievements. We have only to think of Andrei Rublev's Trinity icon, Rimsky-Korsakov's "Easter Overture," the glistening gold and silver onion domes of the Holy-Trinity-St. Sergius Monastery north of Moscow, and Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. Moreover, quietly and indirectly, yet ineluctably, these treasures transmitted Orthodox values to Russians. Patriarch Kirill has spoken eloquently of how Soviet tour guides, even during the days of communist persecution of religion, had to talk about Jesus' crucifixion, Mary the Theotokos, or other aspects of Orthodox Christianity in order to explain the

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2 See Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, new ed. (New York: Penguin, 1993), 264.

3 "Patriarch Kirill: Russia Has Special Civilization Path," *Interfax-Religion*, November 12, 2015, http://orthochristian.com/87635.html.

4 "Equal of the Apostles Great Prince Vladimir, in Holy Baptism Basil, the Enlightener of the Russian Land," Orthodox Church in America, https://oca.org/saints/lives/2019/07/15/102031-equal-of-the-apostles-great-prince-vladimir-in-holy-baptism-basi.

significance of the churches, monasteries, and icons that remained as national cultural treasures. Pupils in Soviet schools continued to encounter Orthodox values in Russian literature. Historians of medieval Russia could not avoid reading that St. Sergius of Radonezh had blessed Dmitrii Donskoi prior to his resounding victory over the Mongols at the Battle of Kulikovo. Even the Russian language, Kirill claims, shaped Russians in a Christian worldview, as with the word for Sunday, which means "resurrection."[5]

The story continues. Orthodoxy has inspired Russians to love their motherland and to protect its Christian heritage. My Russian friends like to claim that their country has never fought a war of aggression; Russians have resorted to arms only to defend themselves from conquering invaders, whose religious values differed from—and sometimes directly threatened—their own. They count among these instances not only Mongols in the fourteenth century (who demanded monetary tribute but not conversion to Islam) but also Catholic Poles in 1612 (who wished to place the Orthodox Church under the jurisdiction of Rome), Napoleon in 1812 (who adhered to no faith but manipulated religion for his own purposes), and in 1941 the godless Nazis. Moreover, Russia is said to have become a great empire not by conquering neighboring lands, but rather by peaceably extending its economic and cultural influence. Native peoples in Siberia could retain their cultural identity yet be loyal to Russia. A writer such as Gogol could write about his native Ukraine in the Russian language and for an imperial audience.[6]

But Russia and its Orthodoxy could also be threatened from within, especially after Peter the Great came to power in the early eighteenth century and established St. Petersburg as his window to Europe. By transferring his capital to the banks of the Baltic, Peter distanced himself from the Orthodox heartland, and while he affirmed the Orthodox faith for himself and his subjects, he was determined to control and modernize the Church. In the Moscow Kremlin, ancient churches stand

5 See Metropolitan Kirill, "Gospel and Culture," in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia*, ed. John Witte, Jr., and Michael Bourdeaux (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999), 66-76.

6 See Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation*, 4th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 88-90.

next to government administrative buildings, but for his new Kremlin, the Peter and Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg, Peter built a church whose golden spire could be that of a Reformed church in Amsterdam. Moreover, Peter recruited a new generation of Church leadership from priests who had been educated in Kiev by Peter Mohila, who drew from contemporary Catholic and especially Jesuit thought to reinvigorate and reform Orthodox theology. And in a crowning blow Peter abolished the patriarchate and placed the Church beneath a procurator, a government-appointed minister, who directed the Church's Most Holy Synod.

While many scholars today argue that the Synodal Period included creative initiatives in religious education and church social work, the version of the Orthodox story that I have most often heard in Russia speaks of a Babylonian captivity. Catholic scholasticism infected Orthodox theology, replacing liturgical mystery with scholastic precision, as with the notion of transubstantiation. French and Italian styles of religious art, rather than ancient Russian traditions, came to dominate icon painting. The Procurator and Most Holy Synod suppressed popular veneration of miracle-working relics, icons, and springs. The Church canonized only a handful of saints, most of whom were bishops who exemplified compliance with state authorities.

Peter and his successors, especially Catherine the Great, closed many of the monasteries and ordered the rest to engage less in prayer and worship and more in "socially productive" activities such as charitable work. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Nicholas I gave the Church new prominence, but as a pillar of autocracy and Russian nationalism. The Church was ill-prepared to respond to the dramatic social changes that would soon come: rapid industrialization that would transform millions of Orthodox peasants into a new rootless urban proletariat, growing agitation for political reform and even violent revolution, and intellectual alienation from the Church. Tolstoy became a commanding moral figure as he reformulated Christianity in terms of the self-denying ethic of the Sermon on the Mount and rejected the Church's social privilege and its promotion of religious superstition. Tensions were growing within the Church itself: Many parish priests resented the hierarchs, who enjoyed social privilege and monetary wealth that they did not; often, priests' sons could get a higher

education only in a church seminary, but many of them had no interest in the priesthood, and some were so alienated from the Church and so interested in revolutionary change that they rose up against their deans and professors and even killed them.[7]

In the next years, social and political chaos only intensified. A democratic revolution took place in 1905 but failed to establish a viable constitutional monarchy. The conflict that would later be known as the First World War sowed further turmoil. While rumors spread about Rasputin's influence over the royal family and his moral debauchery, Nicholas II conducted a disastrous war. Several million Russian soldiers died; millions of others deserted and returned home as marauding bands that violently seized food or land. When Nicholas was forced to abdicate in March of 1917, many of the Church's leaders joined in the rejoicing. For the first time in 200 years, the Church was free of state control and could convene a long-awaited council to renew and reform its life. But only a few days after the council convened, a handful of Bolsheviks led by Lenin stormed into the Winter Palace and took control of the reins of government. Now the very survival of the Church was at stake.

In the version of Russia's Orthodox story that I have been relating, the October Revolution looms up as divine retribution against a Russia—and a Russian Orthodox Church—that had wandered far away from the Christian values of Prince Vladimir. More than once, Russian Orthodox friends have said to me, "If Russia had truly been Orthodox, its people never would have allowed the Revolution to happen. And if Russians had truly been Orthodox, they would have immediately quashed the fierce campaign that the Bolsheviks unleashed against the Church." Only a few days after the Revolution, the first priest died at the hands of Bolshevik hooligans. In January 1918, the first bishop was martyred. By September, when the council had to terminate its work, it had recorded 121 incidences of martyrdom. Over the next forty years, several hundred thousand Soviets would die for their faith, including 300 of the 600 members of the 1917-18 council. Tens of thousands of churches were shut, razed, or converted into gymnasiums,

7 For conditions in the seminaries, see Laurie Manchester, *Holy Fathers, Secular Sons: Clergy, Intelligentsia, and the Modern Self in Revolutionary Russia* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008).

factories, apartment houses, or office buildings. By 1939, no monastery or theological school remained. Only Stalin's shift in religious policy after 1941 to win support for the war saved the Church from complete annihilation.[8]

In the Orthodox way of telling the story, those martyred by the Bolsheviks preserved the Christian values that had made Russia truly "Russia." In the face of death, they refused to hate their persecutors but, on the contrary, regarded them as fellow children of God. As one contemporary Church leader has written, the Russian martyrs were characterized by "childlike simplicity, trustworthiness, not holding grudges, inexhaustible goodwill toward others . . . and, above all, faith in God."[9] Their blood was the seed by which the Church could someday come back to life. In 1988, in the midst of Gorbachev's glasnost ("openness") and perestroika ("restructuring"), the Church was allowed to celebrate the millennium of Christianity in Russia. Over the next two years, the Communist Party would lose its grip on power, and the Soviet Union would fall apart.

As the new Russia was born, the Church regained the independence that it had tasted all too briefly in 1917. It immediately renewed its mission to the nation and for twenty-five years now has been calling Russians back to their founding story—that Russia is essentially different from a West that is secular, individualistic, consumeristic, and increasingly anti-Christian and immoral. Things have come full circle: Prince Vladimir's civilizational choice once again defines the real Russia.

COMPETING STORIES

Founding stories are always under negotiation. Like Civil War monuments in the United States, they can be removed, replaced, or recontextualized. In Russia too, other stories compete with Orthodoxy's. As longtime Russia observer Geraldine Fagan has pointed out, Russia has its own traditions of religious diversity and even religious toleration.

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8 See my book *Holy Rus': The Rebirth of Orthodoxy in the New Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 122-163.

9 Vladimir Vorob'ev, "Predieslovie," in *Kifa, patriarshii mectobliustitel' sviashchennomuchenik Petr, Mitropolit Krutitskii (1861–1937)* [Kifa, Patriarchal Representative, Holy New Martyr Peter, Metropolitan of Krutitsk] (Moscow: St. Tikhon's University Press, 2012), 7. My trans.

While Orthodox believers have been a privileged majority, the Russian Empire included groups that had broken off from Orthodoxy, such as Old Believers and Molokans; Catholics and Protestants who came from Western Europe and won converts in Russia; and Buddhists, Muslims, animists, and members of other religions. It was clear that relievers who belonged to minority religious groups would welcome Nicholas II's edict of religious toleration in 1905, in which the emperor, who regarded himself as the special protector of the Orthodox Church, declared, "We have always had the heartfelt aspiration to secure freedom of belief and worship for each of our subjects in accordance with the dictates of his conscience."[10] But there were also Orthodox leaders who acknowledged that faith should be a matter of freedom of choice, not state compulsion.[11]

Another way of telling Russia's story focuses on its essential relatedness to Europe. Russia has never been isolated from its neighbors, and other European empires interacted with, and helped shape, Russian identity. By the nineteenth century, most Russian nobles were more fluent in French than Russian, and they summoned doctors from Hamburg and Berlin to treat their illnesses. Other Germans offered key administrative and technical advice; the Russian word for post office (pochta) comes from the German (Post). Some of Orthodoxy's greatest architectural achievements, such as St. Basil's Cathedral on Red Square, were designed by Italian architects, while English merchants established important trade centers in cities such as St. Petersburg. Even today, when Russians want nicely renovated apartments or quality consumer goods, they talk about a "European standard." And many Russians today want their country to achieve a comparable European standard in its political and legal systems, including a genuine separation of church and state (already anchored in the Russian Constitution), the rule of law, and a greater commitment to democratic political structures and government transparency.

Other Russians still take pride in the October Revolution, which American historian Mark Steinberg has recently called a "leap into

10 See Geraldine Fagan, *Believing in Russia: Religious Policy after Communism* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 10.

11 Fagan, *Believing in Russia*, 10.

utopia."[12] This way of telling Russia's story refuses to abandon the dream of a classless society or the Bolshevik success in transforming Russia within a few decades into an industrial giant and a global superpower. And while the Communist Party today no longer plays a decisive role in Russian politics, it remains second in size only to President Putin's United Russia Party. Lenin has not yet been buried (although his mausoleum on Red Square is rarely open now), and his statues remain ubiquitous in Russia's parks and city squares (although the sweeping hand gesture that once confidently promised a proletarian-made future is today more apt to be directed toward a newly-constructed church building or one of the glass-clad banks and shopping complexes that now dominate the new cityscape).

Even Stalin can come back into the story, especially when Russians focus on the Soviet victory in the Second World War. While the war left unparalleled suffering in its wake—as many as 28 million Soviets died—it also demonstrated the Soviet people's unique capacity to unite to defeat an unparalleled evil. The famous photograph of Soviet soldiers planting the Soviet flag on top of the bombed-out Reichstag in Berlin powerfully represents the pride that Russians feel to this day in having saved Western civilization from Hitler's barbarism. And the war not only secured but also expanded their imperial pretensions, which now included Eastern and Central Europe. Seventy years later, Victory Day parades remain immensely popular in Russia, and next to the state's display of impressive military strength are gatherings of ordinary citizens who march through the streets, holding photographs of beloved relatives who sacrificed themselves to defend the fatherland. Russians still refer to it as the Great Patriotic War.

President Putin has skillfully woven these stories together. He honors Orthodoxy as Russia's historic religion—and is not hesitant to identify himself as an Orthodox believer who wears a baptismal cross—yet he is careful to emphasize Russia's multicultural, multireligious character. He presents Russia as a modern, secular European nation, even as he supports the "traditional values" of Christian morality that

12 See Mark Steinberg, *The Russian Revolution: 1905-1921* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

the Orthodox Church has declared to be foundational to Russian society and, indeed, to Western civilization as a whole.[13] He has condemned Stalin's crimes against humanity and paid homage to the victims of the Great Terror at Butovo, a secret police killing field near Moscow that has been transformed into a church memorial site, but he has also praised Stalin as a great world leader. Putin ignores the tensions and even contradictions between these different narratives; all that matters is how any or all of them can remind Russians of their imperial greatness.

The Orthodox Church too has learned to weave a seamless whole out of these competing narratives. In this harmonization, Russia's other historic religions support the same traditional values as the Orthodox Church. Russians and Ukrainians are one people because they are all the heirs of Rus'—and because they fought side by side in the Great Patriotic War. Church leaders say that Stalin wanted to destroy the Church, yet that he came to see that he needed the Church to unify the Russian people behind him after the Nazi invasion. Moreover, Church leaders affirm that the Western principle of separation of church and state is good because it protects the Church's independence, even as they assign the Russian government a divine duty to promote the Church and Orthodox social values. The Church believes that the Russian people and their state need Orthodoxy because Orthodoxy continues to play an essential role in securing Russian pride and identity.

THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD

An American Orthodox acquaintance, with much experience in Russia, once told me, "The leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church believe, above all, in Russia. Secondly, they believe in the Orthodox Church. And thirdly, they believe—perhaps—in Jesus Christ." That comment is biting and unfair. But my acquaintance was trying to express his genuine concern about a church that since the fall of communism has sometimes seemed to promote Russia's imperial greatness more than the gospel of Jesus Christ. A thoughtful Russian Orthodox believer might pose an even more sobering question: Does the Russian Orthodox Church today even recognize the difference between the kingdoms of

13 See my article, ""Moscow Connection: U.S. Evangelicals' Strange Alliance with Russian Orthodox," *The Christian Century* 135/17 (Aug. 15, 2018): 10-12.

this world and the Kingdom of God? Or does the Church believe that the Kingdom of God will come to earth if the Russian nation is once again proud and strong?

Not far from the Kremlin stands Christ the Savior Cathedral, an imperial edifice. Originally constructed in the late nineteenth century as a memorial to Russia's victory over Napoleon in 1812, Stalin had the cathedral imploded in 1931 and began work on an even more grandiose project: a Parliament of the Soviets that would be topped by a 200-foot tall statue of Lenin. But the Second World War intervened, and the Soviet victory made earlier imperial gestures seem less important. Under Khrushchev, the site was turned into a huge outdoor, heated swimming pool. In the 1990s, President Boris Yeltsin and Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov led the charge for rebuilding the cathedral, and in the jubilee year 2000 a council of bishops reconsecrated it.[14] The building belongs to the state, but the Church is allowed to conduct worship in it. When Patriarch Kirill celebrates the Easter Vigil, broadcast on national television, President Putin and other state dignitaries are in attendance. Is the message that Orthodoxy makes Russia great or that the Russian state has helped make the Orthodox Church great? And does either message have anything to do with Christ?

What about other religious groups in Russia? In 2012, religious education became part of the federal curriculum for Russia's public schools. In principle, children and their parents can choose from several tracks (including world religions and secular ethics) or opt out altogether, and instruction is limited to thirty one-hour sessions in the fourth and fifth grades. Nevertheless, in many parts of the country "The Foundations of Orthodox Culture" is the most viable option and is supplemented by local curricular requirements. The federal textbook refers to Orthodoxy as the source of the values by which Russians have lived over the centuries. No track or textbook looks explicitly at the contributions that Catholics and Protestants have made to Russia. In the Orthodox way of telling Russia's story, they are inevitably associated with the West—Polish Catholics, German Lutherans, or Pentecostals

14 See Konstantin Akinsha and Gregory Kozlov, with Sylvia Hochfield, *The Holy Place: Architecture, Ideology, and History in Russia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 145-165.

evangelized by Swedish missionaries—and are therefore not quite Russian. Recent legislation banning the Jehovah's Witnesses further dramatizes the marginalization that minority religious groups experience.

Every people needs an identity that they can be proud about. Hatred of one's country and culture is perhaps more dangerous than pride in, even prideful love of, one's people and its distinctive historical path. As communism disintegrated in the 1990s, Russians experienced not only freedom but also humiliation. After robbing them of their historic cultural identities, the Bolsheviks failed to create the new Soviet person. And now the West roared into Russia, along with the identities that popular culture and global marketers try to foist on all of us. Some Westerners regarded Russians as recently-released prisoners who had nothing more than the ravages of war and the gulags to talk about. Some Western Christian groups saw Russia as virgin missionary territory that they could now win for Jesus, as though a thousand years of Orthodoxy, however weakened by a century of communism, was beside the point. The Russian economy was in shambles, with the GNP scarcely more than that of tiny Denmark. When the ruble collapsed in 1998, my Russian friends could not even find—or afford—black tea or fresh eggs in the grocery store. Many were still struggling to get by when I lived in Russia for the first time in 2004. When they asked me about my life and I talked about the cars I owned or the places I liked to go on vacation, I began to realize that I was talking to people who could not do any of these things—and I learned to be quiet.

So, Russians have tried to salvage those parts of its past that they can take pride in, those parts that make them distinctive and therefore more than just Europe's poorer, weaker cousins. The temptation to reassert empire has been irresistible, and an imperial people wants the respect of other empires, which for Russians today means the European Union, China, and above all the United States. Russia asserts that Ukraine belongs to its sphere of influence. Russia argues that as a world power it has a responsibility to suppress Islamic militancy in Syria. And Russia elbows its way into the U.S. presidential elections to warn American political leaders such as Hillary Clinton that when they call for democracy and human rights in the former Soviet sphere, they

encourage the dissolution of Russia itself, which has already lost far too much of its empire.

The Russian Orthodox Church helps support these claims. Half of its parishes and monasteries are in Ukraine, and it wants to hold on to them; the Church calls for Russian solidarity with the 10% of Syrians who identify as Orthodox and have felt secure under President Bashar al-Assad; and it argues that the Russian nation has the right to preserve its cultural heritage against the erosive effects of Western values.

But Jesus declared to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." For "whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (Mt. 20:26), and "put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no help" (Ps. 146:3). And despite their imperial pretensions, Russia and its Orthodoxy have not completely forgotten this side of the Christian story. Throughout the centuries, there have been Russians who because of their faith took up a cross and became "destitute, afflicted, and ill-treated—of whom the world was not worthy" (Heb. 11:37-38). Two of Prince Vladimir's sons, Boris and Gleb, accepted death at the hands of a power-hungry brother rather than plunge Rus' into civil war; today, they are honored as Russian Orthodoxy's first saints and martyrs. Nine hundred years later, a desperate and dying Tolstoy fled to the monastery at Optina Pustyn, even though the Most Holy Synod had declared him excommunicated. Dostoyevsky was moved to tears by the hardened criminals in the labor camps who nevertheless repented of their sins and confidently proclaimed on Easter morning, "He is risen." And today the school textbook on Russia's Orthodox culture teaches children that next to love of nation and a right to self-defense, Christian greatness lies in refusing to take revenge, as when Tsar Alexander I and his troops marched into Paris in 1814 but did not return Napoleon the favor of burning and looting.

In his recent book on Tolstoy, Father Georgii Orechanov, a prominent Orthodox priest and professor in Moscow, asserts that Russia's intellectuals helped pave the way to the Bolshevik Revolution because they ignored what they had no right to ignore, namely "that the Church had strengthened what was best in the Russian people—humility, the capacity for sacrifice and for enduring inhumane living conditions, the ability to show heartfelt compassion and to forgive

enemies." But Orechanov wisely adds that "Tolstoy himself always sensed his connection to the Orthodoxy of the people . . . even when he sharply criticized the Church for its close connection to the state and the absence of freedom of conscience."[15]

Perhaps Tolstoy believed deep down what I do: that the Russian people and their church have been at their best when they have asked the empires of this world to pay homage to "the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ." For only "he shall reign forever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

15 Georgii Orechanov, *Lev Tolstoi: "Prorok bez chesti"* [Lev Tolstoy: "Prophet without Honor"] (Moscow: Eksmo, 2017), 579. My trans.

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Suffering:
What is the church doing?[1]

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most troubling topics in theological and philosophical discourse concerns suffering. What is suffering? How do we reconcile suffering and the Christian faith? How can an all-powerful good God exist with suffering in the world? The questions are seemingly endless. Christians from the inception of the church have addressed suffering in many ways. Some have approached it spiritually, others reasonably, some trying to explain it, others dismissing it.[2] Some blame the devil for suffering; others blame God, humanity, or sin. Not only these differences and questions, but how do we even define suffering? When does pain, a mechanism of the body that deters us from even more pain, become suffering? Is it subjective to each individual or is there some kind of predetermined line that when crossed, pain becomes suffering?

1 This research is a product of the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Valentour Fellowship.

2 Spiritual approaches and approaches based on reason are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Once the definition of suffering is decided (if at all possible), then how is the church supposed to respond to it? Is the church supposed to welcome suffering and allow it to shape and mold the character of the people? Is the church supposed to respond to only suffering procured by believing in Christ? Or is the church supposed to respond to all forms of suffering outside of the Christian community? Is it even the church's responsibility to try and alleviate suffering from people's lives? I guess the answer to some of these questions depends on whether one believes suffering comes from God or some other source. If suffering comes from God, then who are we to try and stop it?

By no means am I even going to try to address all of the concerns above in this work. The above statement is simply to demonstrate (in a limited sense, I could go on for several more pages) the breadth and complexity of suffering. Yet, I will still address suffering in connection with my research provided by the Valentour Fellowship from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

The purpose of the research is to explore the dynamics of the church in relation to the topic of suffering, particularly the church's response to suffering in its missional context. I traveled to the locations of Oxford, England; Thessaloniki, Greece; and Bangalore, India. Each one of these locations serves a specific purpose to the research of the proposed question – what is suffering? First and foremost, travel to Oxford England serves in two essential capacities. In Oxford, an organization called The Centre for Mission Studies hosts a plethora of students from many nations across the world. These strictly Ph.D. students are leaders of their respective cultures and provided an educated response to the suffering experienced in their particular context. Oxford also provides a context that serves as a juxtaposition to Greece and India (similar, yet still different than the United States). Second, I traveled to Thessaloniki, Greece. This country struggles on two different fronts. Refugees from the conflicts of Israel/Palestine, Iran, Iraq, and the other Middle Eastern countries continue to flee to Thessaloniki. The church and community in this area deal with their own suffering due to the economic crisis and the suffering of those fleeing. Third, I traveled to Bangalore, India. India is home to many different problems that could contribute to suffering and provides a different cultural context than the other two locations.

The research concluded with over forty-five interviews of indigenous peoples and foreigners. Although each interview differed from person to person, a few main questions remained the same throughout: (1) What comes to your mind when you hear the word suffering? (2) In your context, what would you say is the largest area of suffering? (3) Tell me a story about when you experienced suffering. (4) How is the church responding to the previously mentioned suffering? (5) When you hear this passage - 1 Peter 1:6-7, what do hear God saying?

Based on the research conducted in four different cultural contexts I will argue two different ideas: suffering is a relative experience that pertains to extreme loss or gain that causes pain beyond the bearable limit of any one individual. Also, no matter the level of suffering, it is still suffering. Nothing should diminish any one person's suffering in light of someone else's suffering. Since no one should diminish the suffering of another, churches need to respond to all levels of suffering relative to each person experiencing that suffering.

In order to accomplish these arguments, based on those interviewed and other observations, I will explain suffering, the difference between persecution and general suffering, give examples of different types of suffering in each of the locations, explain how the church responds, and then reflect on what the church in the United States can learn from the responses of the global church in reference to suffering.

SUFFERING: WHAT IS IT?

Defining suffering may seem like an easy task and, in many ways, it is easy. But the problem with trying to define suffering arises when the context of that definition has, for many years, done everything possible to avoid or eliminate suffering. Sunquist recognizes that this is one of the first steps that must be discussed before defining suffering. He states that,

A word needs to be said about suffering. Writing in an age described as postcolonial, but from the United States—a country recognized by many scholars today as an empire more than a nation-state—it may seem strange to raise the issue of suffering. The West has worked hard in the past centuries to avoid or placate all suffering. Modern science

and technology is based on the commonly accepted goal of relieving suffering and making life, from cradle to grave, easier.[3]

He argues that the western church and society has worked so hard to eliminate suffering, that they are intrinsically unable to see it as a part of their identity, but rather see their identity as victorious and conquering.[4] This same concept contributes to our own ability to define something that we do not know firsthand. However, even though the western world may not understand or identify with suffering as a whole, that does not mean that people in the western world do not suffer. Actually, there is significant overlap between the suffering experienced in the western world compared to the suffering in other locations. And based on the many stories and personal ideas of suffering from those around the world, I decided on this definition: Suffering is loss or gain that causes pain beyond the bearable limit of any one individual.[5] That sounds fairly simple, but it adds a subjective element that some people may not feel comfortable ascribing to the idea of suffering.

Now, of course, we must have discernment when confronting suffering based on this definition since it exposes the category of suffering to complete and utter nonsense. By what objective value can we measure against the potential bearable limit of an individual? If someone says that they suffer because their video game console broke in the middle of beating the final level, to many that may seem ridiculous![6] But here lies the problem with suffering: we cannot ever know the bearable limit of any one individual because the bearable limit of each individual exists in relationship to that individual's life experiences. While all people agree that torture of any sort is a form of suffering, the "lesser" sufferings people experience may not even appear to be suffering at all. This is where a differentiation of pain and suffering exist. Unfortunately, the line between the two is blurry. Pain helps humanity avoid suffering (a

3 Scott W. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition), Location 157.

4 Ibid., 160.

5 This includes pain in any form – physical, emotional, or mental. Most forms of pain fit within one of these three categories.

6 There is always the possibility of mental illness or other variables that determine an individual's bearable limit. No one situation is alike, and each handled with their own care.

prick from a rose bush and the experience of that pain stops us from rolling our face in it); it is when that continuous pain goes beyond any one person's bearable limit that it becomes suffering.[7] If everyone were to adopt this definition, a risk exists where people may say they are suffering in order to attain sympathy or undue help. Risk, however, should not be the deterrent for understanding suffering. Wisdom and guidance by the Holy Spirit should guide our thoughts and actions when encountering possible fraudulent claims. In the end, suffering does not have an objective measurable standard, and therefore should be approached with a soft heart and wisdom.

Another important differentiation pertains to suffering and suffering for faith. Is there a difference between general suffering and suffering for faith? It seems as though the main reason pertains to the cause of the suffering. Suffering for faith or persecution seems accepted by most Christians. When asked, "What comes to your mind when you hear the word suffering?" Christians, for the most part, connect the question to the persecution of believers – suffering for Christ (especially those that are in the midst of suffering for their faith). For instance, take this elderly Christian's response from India,

> Well, I accepted the Lord during the time when the king was ruling in Nepal. And so, any Christian activity was illegal. And they would just put people in jail. And there were several pastors and believers who were imprisoned during that time. So that means nobody would make that decision unless he or she had a real encounter. Otherwise, they knew what the consequences were and what could happen. So I understood right from the beginning that suffering is a part of the gospel and the call of God. And reading the gospels. Then because I was in that kind of circumstances and I saw the scripture that confirms that. So I grew up that suffering is a part of the call of God. It's not something unusual or something. He's already warned us this will happen to you. And I saw it happening around me. So it's a part of the gospel and call of God.[8]

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7 For more information on this idea, see C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2014), 86-118.

8 Audio file 0059; Henceforth, all audio files from the interviews will be listed as Audio file plus the file number (chronological order of audio files).

Again, the main difference between general suffering and persecution pertains to the cause. Those that experience their faith in the midst of suffering understand that they suffer for their faith. Even the suffering that most people in the west experience and have a hard time explaining such as natural disasters, those Christians living in suffering still understand positively and related to their faith. So, in their mind, no difference exists between general suffering and persecution except that people that oppose the faith cause persecution. A gentleman from Ethiopia responded,

Causes might be different, but the pain that people endure in their everyday lives, that's what I think. And maybe from a biblical perspective, suffering would be something related to the fall of humankind, and that led to the suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ, which we partake if we choose to follow Him. I see suffering as a phenomenon that happens every day where I come from. And people endure the pain, the shortcomings, alienation, and conflict. All of those things can be under the category of suffering.[9]

Another way of looking at the difference between persecution and general suffering is that the one falls under the umbrella of the other. For example, anyone who completed grade school knows that a square is a rectangle, but a rectangle is not always a square. So also, persecution is also suffering, but suffering is not always persecution.

EXAMPLES OF SUFFERING AND THE CHURCH

At each of the locations I visited, suffering looked different and yet, it looked the same. Several themes surfaced no matter the context. When asked to give some examples of suffering, many people talked about grief (loss of life), poverty, drugs, illness, loneliness, and some other similar examples. So, for the next few pages, I will give examples and stories of various people in different contexts and their conception of these kinds of sufferings. Alongside these examples, their perception of how the church currently responds to that suffering will also be listed. I will analyze these church responses later, but it seems best to see the church responses paralleled to the stories themselves.

9 Audio file 004

GLOBAL SOUTH

One of the most unique experiences on this journey pertains to the interviews with the various leaders from the global south. Each one of these people experienced suffering to such an extent that would perplex the mind of any westerner. They live daily in the midst of suffering of all sorts. Some have had their homes or churches burned, families ostracized them, beaten, involved in war, imprisoned, poverty, hunger, and the list goes on. A man from Ethiopia expressed suffering in his context:

> People are starving. At the moment we have nearly seven million people starving because of the drought. That's something we have been praying about and discussing as a nation and as families. All of the pictures you see in the media or the people you see out in the street, that's painful really... There is suffering related with sickness... Maybe because of their poor economic situation that affects the health system... More than that, suffering that has been going on in our country at the moment is the lack of peace among people. Last September we had a huge outburst of people fighting with one another. And that was really a terrible time, and we lost hope to even lead a peaceful life, to continue to the normal daily activities because there is no peace. And when we lack peace, it's maybe the worst thing. If there is peace, you can work towards alleviating other issues. But if there is no peace, you are just a wanderer... Just wandering everywhere, losing everything. So we are very concerned, assuming that we would face that same problem. Praise the Lord that situation has been controlled and we are under a state of emergency at the moment... Worse than that is the problem of the human heart. When the human heart is not really touched by the peace that comes from above, then people behave differently. Maybe being led [by] selfish ambition, like-mindedness, pleasure-seeking, injustice, and all of that.[10]

In his view, the church responds to these sufferings in this way:

> I can think of three things. Number one is, I'm speaking of my own church, what we are trying to do is be active in evangelism and discipleship. We do that because we believe that the real problem of all what is going on around can be solved or alleviated if we really help people to understand God and the way God works and the way

10 Audio file 004

> God wants us to live. So, that being our motto and vision, we are actively engaged in sharing the love of Jesus all over the country... When people have this perspective of God, and bring God to the center of the whole dilemma... then things would settle down and would have proper perspective, and people would behave with love and justice... The second one is we try to do some social activities. Because during this time of suffering, people need food, shelter, protection, [and] lots of things. So within our level of capacity as the Body of Christ, we can't sit idle and see what's going on there and just talk about it. We provide food for those who are hungry. Provide a place for those who want shelter, for those who are misplaced. And also we provide medical care and things like that. Social activity is, it goes side by side. Wherever we go, to provide the gospel, we try to provide pure and clean water, because it's not enough only to provide the gospel, [but] to show the practicality of the gospel. Whenever we preach the gospel, it's about God's love. And when we say God loves you, that means God loves you by addressing every person in you - the whole person in you. So we have that aspect of the Great Commission governing or leading our day to day life. So that is the second aspect. The third aspect of what we are doing is functioning as peace agents. At times working along the government and working along traditional leadership in Ethiopia. The government political system is there, and then the church leadership system is on the other side. And then there is this cultural leadership everywhere, and it differs from place to place because there is a tribal leadership. So we are national and everywhere as a denomination. But wherever our churches are located, are in the midst of different cultures which have their own leadership. So we work alongside this leadership to build up peace and good relationships and also justice and just a good spirit of living together. So basically that's what we are doing to alleviate suffering.[11]

A similar struggle exists in South Sudan. War has consumed the country for many years. A leader from the country spoke about the extreme violence, the struggle to get food on a regular basis, and the lack of shelter because of the war for fear of being attacked or houses being burned. Whenever they would rebuild structures of any kind, those fighting in the war would ravage them. The church struggles to make any difference. The government declared Christianity illegal (people arrested, and assets assumed) so preaching became illegal, and

11 Audio file 004

the government destroyed many churches. In the midst of this suffering, the leader said that the Church is still a mouthpiece for those suffering and stood against the government. Yet, some of the church gave up, and some of it has compromised its standards (leadership). In the end, he stated,

> Helpless, the church is helpless. They want to help, but can't. They have no resources. One Pastor said, "I wanted to help, but I can't. I'm struggling providing for my family." Another Pastor said, "I got some little food in my house, but these 50,000 people out there without food… I decided to not eat food while so many people out there are without food. I feel guilty.[12]

He went through his own suffering while trying to serve the people. When he was in the North, he led an outreach during the war where the Islamic government cut off resources the people and to the church. He mobilized the youth and students in order to preach the gospel which upset the authorities and so the authorities arrested them. They detained one of the members who they thought was a Muslim convert (an extreme offense), and the group feared for his life. They finally let the man free, and although the authorities "gave" permission to have an event at the university, the government burned down the tents and beat the participants.

A leader from Burundi also experiences suffering in the face of war. The current unstable country suffers from killings, arrests, and destruction, and, according to the leader, because of this poverty more violence ensues. When asked about the church's involvement with all the suffering and war, he stated that the church functions more organically rather than organizationally. The different church locations provide a place where those that are suffering can come together and feel peace. It is also a welcoming place where people can pray and mourn with those that are mourning. Unfortunately, the church has very little, if any, systems or programs in place to help with the experienced suffering. The leader said that "The church does not rise above the life conditions of its culture; how then can the church help where it is suffering in the same way?" and the "main way of contributing is praying, singing, praising

12 Audio file 005

the Lord [which] brings hope (some may think of this as a mental flight, but it's not)."[13]

THE UNITED KINGDOM

Suffering experienced in the United Kingdom juxtaposes the suffering experienced in the Global South. Not only does the suffering differ, but also the church's response to it. The United Kingdom and those interviewed present a very similar circumstance to that of the United States and serves as the western counterpart to the research. Outside the context of war, famine, and other such "extreme" sufferings, the United Kingdom better represents the idea of global suffering. Suffering here focused more on the broader ideas of pain/hurt that all people experience (i.e., death [by old age or sickness], "poverty," drug abuse, sickness/medical issues, divorce, etc.). It holds, in some sense, to the idea of 1 Peter 5:9b, "...the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings."[14]

Yet, in this tumultuous time of radical violence and bombings, the United Kingdom has especially experienced a multitude of sufferings in this way. Just weeks before conducting this research, two bombings took place - one in Manchester and another in London. Having resources at their disposal, it seems that the church in the United Kingdom does not really know how to respond to the suffering caused by the Manchester bombing and other terrorist attacks. They pray and organically welcome those that are in need, but there seems to be a lack of organizational leadership fighting against that suffering. When asked, nobody could

13 Audio file 0012
14 NIV

answer what the church is doing for the people and community other than simply "being there."[15]

A female member of the Anglican clergy in the United Kingdom, thought of suffering as pain, confusion, and especially thought of God when she heard the word "suffering." Locally, she believed that "people are suffering through sin; culture has been on a journey without God."[16] She also mentioned that some of the sufferings the people in the United Kingdom are currently experiencing pertain to Islamic extremists.[17] In connection to these types of sufferings,

> The church is good at reacting (often wait until something happens). The church is not out-front anticipating what is going on and it needs to take the lead rather than just respond. The church is also good at social justice (food banks, counseling, crisis centers, etc.), but these efforts usually take place as grassroots/organic and not so much of the prophetic edge (stopping it before it happens). Usually, the church chooses either signs and wonders (name it and claim it where suffering is not an issue) or carry the cross so much that we are burdened by it. We need balance where we are not comfortable with the suffering but still have hope.[18]

In the personal realm, she experienced suffering by means of an abusive marriage most of her life. But, the abusive aspect of the marriage was not, according to the interviewee, the only aspect of great suffering.

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15 In the United States, the news stations speak about a shooting here, a killing there, police brutality there, and all kinds of little pockets of incidents. And then the world news reports a bombing or a terrorist attack and people do not stop talking about it. Everyone is like, "Woah, there was a terrorist attack; there was a bombing. That's crazy!", and rightfully so. But in the United States (my own context and experience), when someone dies it just becomes commonplace. But while I was in the United Kingdom, a handful of people were killed by terrorists. And forty some plus were seriously injured and hospitalized in London and in the wake of that, I've asked some people, "How is the church responding to that?" And they did not know, necessarily, because they were not in the area where it happened. But it is hard to see that such an event happened. It is hard to see just by walking in a town for an hour or so south of the bombing and an hour and twenty minutes away from the other terrorist attack. Just by observing, it does not seem like anything happened. It shows a kind of desensitized nature.

16 Audio file 0013

17 The proposed culprits of the terrorist attacks in Manchester and London.

18 Audio file 0013

Divorce, hard enough, became the means of loneliness and isolation. Referencing the church's response, she said that nobody was intentionally malicious, they just did not know what to do. She was very lonely. The idea of lifelong marriage was interwoven with her foundational tenets of faith. So, when she came to the conclusion that divorce was permissible under certain circumstances, she felt like everything was coming down around her. Her faith became incomprehensible. Unfortunately, her home church rejected her for committing a supposed sin, which caused deep unsettledness. When asked how the church should respond to someone in this situation, she said, "the church needs to find the confidence in the sovereignty of God. The church needs to find a theology of marriage and divorce (especially in different contexts). And the church shouldn't rush to conclusions. Sit with the pain (be with during suffering)."[19]

Another prominent leader in the church from the United Kingdom said that suffering is universal and that "no one gets through life without scars."[20] He also said the following in reference to suffering:

> This Saturday someone was in catatonic state because of systematic abuse... In this city of great affluence, influence, and power, we have a great shadow side of poverty. Mental illness... In Oxford, you got the intellectually elite in England. We still find many people suffering from mental illness... refugees...[21]

In response to the question about the church's response to these types of suffering, his church takes care of the poor by means of a food bank, job training, and they take some poor individuals out for a weekend to give them good experiences and "spoil them rotten."[22] The church also has someone on staff that deals specifically with the issue of mental illness with local students. In reference to other so-called "larger" areas of suffering, the church has no systematic program or process in place. But, he said, "We just had a discussion as leaders in that particular church. If what happened in Manchester happened here, what would we

19 Audio file 0013
20 Audio file 0016
21 Audio file 0016
22 Audio file 0016

do?" They connected with civil authorities and city council to produce a plan.

He also experienced suffering within his family. His wife had five miscarriages in two years which he described as "personal hell... a dark place." He said, "Lord, I work for you, and I think you're treating your employees badly; this is not right." In reflecting on his suffering, he ponders,

Paul says that we comfort others with the comfort we received. That presumes that we received comfort because we suffered. Suffering gives me an empathy to understand others, but it was costly, and I don't think it was fair. But why should I be exempt from suffering like the rest of creation?

I then asked him, "What would you do? What would be a meaningful pastoral response?" And he responded, "I'm not sure anyone could have done or said anything. Perhaps someone that could identify with them. I don't know. Maybe just being there. As clergy, we are there for others, not here for us." He was not alone with that last sentence. When I asked about a story of personal suffering and then asked how the church responded, almost every clergy member responded the same way. It seems broken. Should the church not help all of its members including the leadership?

When I was in the United Kingdom, I pondered about the stories and people I encountered often. One woman spoke about not having a support system and feeling rejected by her church in the midst of her suffering. That resonated with me in the midst of my travels. I was alone for the first time overseas with no support system. One day while visiting London, I reflected,

> Today was more of a relaxing day where I just saw some of the sights, but my mind just couldn't be taken off the subject matter at hand. As I was walking for the first hour, I had an incredible pain in my left foot. So much so that I was limping and trying to walk in different ways. I mean, it was immense pain, and I just kept going. I wasn't going to let that stop me - I don't know, I might not ever be here again. And just thinking about that, that little thing, my own suffering, and in comparison to other people's suffering, I might be tempted to think, "Well that's not a lot compared to other peoples' suffering," but it's still painful, it's still hard to walk. The hardest thing is that I am in

> pain and that there is no one here that I know. I am in a city of millions, and I am by myself. There is no one here. I don't know where to go or what to do… there's just nothing. And so, just thinking, if something were to really happen to me, what would I do? Where would I go? Who would be there for me? And what about the Church? What would the church do? They don't know me. I am in a foreign land; what happens to me? If I am here and something happens, say, drastic, bigger than my foot pain. Would the Church respond here in the midst of crisis for me? It just makes me wonder. As I walk around, it's hard to visually see any suffering on the streets. The streets are full of people. Everyone looks like they're fine and dandy. There are a couple of people homeless in the streets, a couple of peddlers, but that's bound to happen in any large city (unfortunately). But there they are in the streets, so what can the Church do? But even then, with all these people that look like everything is ok, just imagine all of the sufferings that is happening to people mentally, socially, physically, like me in this pain. All around me. What do we do? Do we ignore it? Are we complacent? Do we just say, "Well everyone suffers, those things are minor, who cares about those?" and move forward?[23]

The pain that I experienced while in the United Kingdom was short lived. Soon enough, I returned home in the embrace of loved ones and family. If I were, however, to live in a lonely state of being for a longer period of time, that pain could eventually turn into suffering – a suffering relative to my own experiences and beyond my own bearable limit.

GREECE

The farther away from the United States I traveled, the further I traveled from the familiar and comfortable western culture and ideology. Granted, most people still consider Greece a western nation, but the way of life (values, community, relationships, etc.) compares little to the United States. The most visual western thing about Greece (compared to the United States) pertains to materialism and style (dress, hair, etc.).

Although Greece currently experiences little war-like suffering compared to the global south, the history of Greece is long and complicated. Currently, however, a resounding theme pierces through

23 Audio file 0018

every single interview - the economic crisis. Each person expressed concern and an idea of suffering based on the country's economic state, but if I were simply a tourist, I would not have noticed anything like an economic crisis or even an economic concern. On every street in the city of Thessaloniki, people shop, eat, and look happy. Coffee shops on every block (seriously, every single block) fill to capacity from mid-day to well after midnight. If such an economic crisis exists, it does not exist visually. But what about the rural areas? Surely if an economic crisis exists, it exists outside the hustle and bustle of the city limits. The opposite is true! Not only did I visit these rural towns and saw little to no signs of poverty, but one of the interviewees said that "Financial suffering is worse in urban areas than rural areas. In rural areas cost of living is lower and the people live off of the land."[24] According to a random young adult Greek man working at the local museum, people walk the streets, sit and drink coffee, or relax by the bay because people simply "have nowhere to go!"[25], or an elderly woman put it this way, "Because of the economy, people don't know where to go/what to do!"[26] Another man said that "even if you find a job, it doesn't pay well."[27] The cost of coffee and food is extremely low, and people usually sit around and talk drinking one cup for hours. Yet, one Sunday morning I experienced some of the poverty in Thessaloniki:

> It started off normally. I did my morning routine - ate breakfast, drank my coffee, and got ready for my day. As I made my way out of my apartment located on a busy road in the heart of Thessaloniki, I noticed a man's face through a thin glass window that ran the height of the door. This is definitely not something I usually experienced. He was an older man, a man that looked as though his life was full of stories, full of tales to be told, and lessons to be learned. His closed eyes felt as though they pierced through the glass and deep within my soul. The position of the man deep in sleep meant that if I wanted to leave, I would have to step over him. So, I opened the door and there laid this man's body stretched over the entirety of the entryway. What did I do? I opened the door and stepped over the man and

24 Audio file 0044
25 Audio file 0026
26 Audio file 0049
27 Audio file 0039

> went on my way to church. Should I have stopped? Should I have woken him up? Should I have seen if he needed anything? What would I have offered him? Perhaps this was the best sleep he's had in days, weeks, or months! Needless to say, my heart was broken for this man. Compared to many I don't have much. But compared to many more, I have plenty.[28]

Although this experience proves nothing of the drastic economic state of Greece (these things happen in the United States as well), it shows that a problem exists. The more I looked, the more homelessness I saw, especially early in the morning when most people were sleeping.

A twenty-five-year-old student at the University studying Economics said that one of the biggest issues in Greece is the high unemployment rate of those under thirty. According to his research, that rate is about forty percent. He thinks that first there needs to be some sort of investment into the businesses and towns. Then the taxes need to be decreased. Right now the sales tax is at twenty-four percent. At the same time, wages have been dramatically reduced. According to this young man, the average monthly income is twelve hundred euros a month. That's approximately thirteen hundred U.S. Dollars. He claims that this is a systemic issue in the country of Greece.[29]

A young adult Greek Christian man that works for a non-profit that helps get women out of trafficking expressed his understanding of suffering as disaster aftermath, bad experiences (inner or outer - things stolen or taken away, death, anxiety, depression, etc.), and the economic crisis. He stated that the "economic crisis caused lost jobs, companies to close, sudden income decrease with market prices increase, lack of independence, and much more" and that Greece has a problem with "human trafficking where more than fourteen-thousand people are being trafficked in Greece, and 98% of trafficked people in Greece are refugees."[30] After getting a tour of the red-light district in Thessaloniki (which is legal), the person giving the tour explained that over the past several years more and more Greek women partook in prostitution to

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29 These facts have not been verified. However, even if these numbers are incorrect, it shows the perception of the economic state by the younger population.

30 Audio file 0028

subvert their own economic suffering. And in that atmosphere, many women become trapped and sometimes caught in the trafficking environment.

People responded differently to the question "how is the church responding?" Usually, people understood "church" as the Greek Orthodox church unless the interviewee was a part of a local Protestant church.[31] One man said that we "see the church with all kinds of wealth but homeless in the streets. You ask, 'why is this?'"[32] A pastor of a local Pentecostal church said that the church is "not doing well at responding to the crisis — cannot do anything because we are poor."[33] Another pastor said that "everyone tries to do something - feed, give, shelter, etc. The economic crisis affects the church's ability to reach the community. If money is not coming in, then the church doesn't have the ability to make a change."[34] A woman said that "very few things are done by the church... [the] church has a lot of money; they could do more. They could give people work, not just money."[35] Generally, people see the church (Greek Orthodox) as not doing enough to help people in need with the economic crisis. Most people recognize that the people of the church give food to those in need but distinguish between the people of the church and the organization called the church. If the interviewee connects the word "church" with the Protestant church, then the response is generally that the protestant church is incapable of helping because of their own poverty.

One of the personal sufferings that a few Greeks experienced pertains to them being ostracized by their family because of partaking in Protestant Christianity rather than participating in the Greek-Orthodox Church. One young man said that "Greece is an Orthodox Christian Country… that is just who we are, nothing else."[36] His parents believed that he was a part of a cult for joining a Protestant church. They kicked

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31 Protestant churches are few. The government is making it much more difficult to be a legal Protestant church.

32 Audio file 0026

33 Audio file 0043

34 Audio file 0044

35 Audio file 0049

36 Audio file 0028

him out of the house and chose not to support him at all. After three years, they reconciled. But he said that the church was there for him during that time. The people supported him and came around him as a family where he received emotional, mental, and physical support. From his perspective, "We cannot go through suffering alone. We need community."[37] Similar to this young man's experience are two American women that married Greek men. One of which had a church family while the other did not. Both were ostracized because of being American and had nothing nor anyone to turn to except for the one woman having the church as family giving her support.[38]

A local non-government organization worker said that "If you are used to a certain way of living, having less does not feel that good."[39] Several Greeks said something similar. This shows evidence that suffering is a relative experience that pertains to extreme loss or gain and pain beyond bearable comfort and expectation. The economic crisis that many Greeks describe as suffering when compared with the economic status of most Indians, appears as though the Greeks should just "get over it." An older Greek expressed that mentality about the economic crisis since he traveled to some poorer parts of India. While the comparison may soften the effect of the Greek's suffering, it does not eliminate their struggle to adjust to their loss. Hence, the idea of suffering concerns the relative experience of each person and their own comfort level.

INDIA

India (Bangalore in particular), by far, provided much more information on the topic of suffering not only because of the particular situations of the people in India but also because of the suffering I personally experienced during my visit. (I almost died!) Most of the interviews took place with leaders/pastors of churches ranging from a dozen believers to thousands.[40] Many of the interviewees equated suffering with persecution, so I had to clarify the questions. Even so, when the interviewee understood that the question referred to the

37 Audio file 0028
38 Audio file 0044
39 Audio file 0047
40 The one church in India had over twelve thousand people that attended.

suffering of the society as a whole, it usually circled around back to persecution and faith. However, once clarified, the interviews seemed to theme around certain ideas of suffering such as emotional, relational, and poverty. Some of the Indian's argued that the first two categories stem from the impoverished state of India, but much more connected them with the lack of community or spiritual connectedness. One of the Pastors said, "India is a country that believes that poverty is required to escape the cycle of life and join with the god called Rama. Poverty is a spiritual problem."[41]

The church's response in India to the suffering they currently experience varied per location or church. Most of the churches focus more on their local congregation and the suffering of those people while some other larger churches initiate some reactive type of responses to poverty and sickness. For the most part, however, the church in India lacks resources to even contribute to the societal suffering, let alone the suffering of people in their immediate congregational context. One leader said that most of the help in India comes from mission agencies. His take on those agencies is far from enthusiastic:

> In trying to give aid, in a subtle way they are creating dependency. Some people who come to the faith, come for the wrong reasons. It is much better if we can own the project rather than just receiving aid... Christian agencies have had a genuine desire to help, but in doing so, it has destroyed the economic/caste system that existed. In the process, they reached out to those in the lower strata of society but pushed aside those in the upper strata…. Some [local churches] think outside of the box. Go to local area, find out what resources they have and give them tools to somehow utilize their resources (i.e., create products, etc.)… helping people is not as glamorous as it is portrayed in the newsletters or news stories. Sometimes those that are helping people hurt people in order to receive resources in order to help them.[42]

While the church would rather receive funds in order to take ownership of a project, the Indian is crippled by their own lack of funds to make a difference in their own community. Even though many lack

41 Audio file 0067
42 Audio file 0054

resources to make a change, churches still try to work within the confines of their poverty. One example pertains to an outreach to Hindu temple prostitutes in Bellary.

> …one of the pastors of the church goes to a rural town called Bellary. In Bellary, the tradition is that when a family has two or more female children, one of them is given to the temple as a prostitute. The pastor that goes to Bellary has been bringing those women to Jesus. Those women knew nothing other than prostitution, so they have no way of surviving. The pastor is training them trades in order to have the basic needs of survival.[43]

A pastor of a fairly large church in the heart of Bangalore, spoke about how loneliness and corruption produce suffering in his community. According to the pastor, suffering in Bangalore is relational. He says that "the elderly are lonely because India doesn't have care facilities. They stay at home with the family and the family is never home." And Bangalore is a "…competitive environment with a lot of corruption. Living a moral life is difficult in India. In order to move ahead, you need to cheat. [Then you start asking] 'Is it worth living for God? Where is God?'"[44] Another young woman agrees and says that "Bangalore is a hub where people migrate. There is a sense of a lack of community. Everyone is on their own and in their own world. Because of this, people do not have a sensitivity towards one another unlike smaller towns – rural India – a place where community thrives with family and friends…" and "… corruption itself is not suffering, but a cause for so much suffering."[45]

Adding to the relational suffering the pastor spoke about how, as a child, he experienced ridicule for having a stutter until he was eighteen years of age. He felt worthless, "…but when I matured in the Lord, the stammering went away."[46] Because of his experience, he has learned to look at suffering positively. He says, "Sometimes we suffer because of our own mistakes, but because I went through suffering that was no fault of my own, I can walk people through that suffering… If we

43 Audio file 0067
44 Audio file 0053
45 Audio file 0056
46 Audio file 0053

handle suffering the God-given way, what was meant for evil to actually destroy us, turns around and is for our own good. It keeps us humble; we become more refined; we become more perfected for God to use us on another level."[47] The church never really had anything for the pastor. During his eighteen years of stuttering, his immediate family and some extended family came alongside praying and giving him comfort. The church family never helped.

One of the Sundays while in India, I visited a large church. While the church service itself enlightened me to different styles and theology, the most eye-opening part of the visit pertained to the parking lot. Anyone standing in the parking lot could see the extreme divergence in community living between the wealthy and poor. As we (a missionary and myself) pulled up to the building, we entered a narrow street leading to the rear where the "parking lot" was located. (It was more of a pot-hole ridden, bumpy, dirt-filled open field.) Behind the building, an enormous covered section existed with a large screen projecting the service taking place inside. Making our way through the unpaved parking area and up a steep mound of dirt to the second level, we saw the extreme division within the society of India. The view spoke more than any explanation of poverty, suffering, or the caste system. In the not so far off distance, high luxury apartment buildings towered the sky and provided housing for those with funds and means to live life at ease. Then, right next to these apartments (divided by a wall) are slums. These slums are single story "buildings" compacted together and made up of usually one room. Most are constructed out of stone, bricks, sticks, corrugated metal/plastic, tarps, and whatever the people can scrounge up. Garbage flows out of the area into the water flowing by the slums. Across from the small creek is the church parking lot. The pastor of the church, in whose parking lot I stood, said in response to suffering and the social conditions visible to anyone in attendance that the "…Gospel is the only solution, at least in the context of my country. What people really need is the truth of Jesus. There is a fundamental lack of what is right."[48]

47 Audio file 0053
48 Audio file 0067

A professor at a local Bible College believes that the suffering experienced in India is systemic in nature. He said, "I think one of the injustices and the corruption that is there in the whole system. And so, people who are in power and who have strength publicly, they just get by in everything. But those people in the lower strata of society who have no connection with some power; life is really tough for them."[49] Not only does this professor believe that the caste system provides a difficult structure from which to escape suffering, but so does another pastor who speaks about the complex issues the system creates. So many people need help, that if the pastor would speak out against or fight against the caste system, the government could very well destroy the church in a blink of an eye. For instance, a woman got married and approached the pastor for help to get away from the arranged marriage (based on caste). This woman received abuse after abuse by her new husband, but if the pastor would intervene, the authorities could very well be destroyed. In the midst of such decisions, the pastor feels as though the only thing that he can do is pray. For he has to make a decision between trying to help this woman (which, he said, would fail) or trust God to help her so that he can help others another day. When asked what the church can do to fight the system, the professor responded,

> Of course, there are NGOs that are aggressive to such issues and doing a good job. But as a church, my observation is that they are not really intentionally addressing the issues in society. But when people respond to the gospel and they come to church, then the church helps them in those areas. These people receive that upliftment in the area of their finances and getting a job. The gospel actually, what it does, not only gives them that spiritual liberation, they also understand that they are valuable. They are valued and have rights… So I have seen after they come to the Lord, there is a great change. They come out of that operation. Out of addiction and all of those things. And alcohol and family kind of fights. So their life is transformed. And because of that, now they know how to save money, and they come up in life. I have seen people really do well. Even these people who are working as a security guard as the lowest level of unskilled workers. Within a few years, they save enough money to go and buy land back home. That would have been impossible for them if they were living the way

49 Audio file 0059

> they were living. They were just earning money and blowing it off and drinking and gambling and all of those kinds of things… the church has really kind of impacted those areas. And so they come out of the suffering they have been going through. The majority of the people who respond to the gospel… you tried that and tried this doctor and everything like that. Now you go to church. You will find the answer there. People have gotten the word around. So these are the kind of people who come to church. And they are… really kind of torn apart. The first thing is the experience that spiritual deliverance from evil spirits. And that helps them to now find a good job. And then slowly they start saving money, and there is a peace, and they start sending their kids to school.[50]

Not all suffering looks the same. Each of the examples above vary in large degrees and to some, if these events occurred in their life, they would not be suffering. Yet, because these individuals view their experiences as suffering, no other person should diminish that suffering based on their own experience. Some may have seen or experienced different atrocities around the world and have come to a decision that their own suffering seems insignificant compared to others. Growth in our own experiences is important, but we must be careful to not deny someone else's suffering based on our own understanding/experiences. And we also should not deny our own suffering based on your own understanding. Simply because people suffer horrendous ordeals around the word, that does not mean our suffering is not suffering.[51]

THE CHURCH IN THE U.S. NOW WHAT?

How exactly does this apply to the church in the United States? The experiences are not exactly the same. The sufferings are not exactly the same (to some extent). The cultures are not the same. What is the church in the U.S. to do with the stories of people suffering abroad? What is the church in the U.S. to do with how the global church responds to suffering – grief, loneliness, poverty, etc.? I propose three main actions for the church in the U.S.: listen and ask, exegete, and act.

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50 Audio file 0059

51 See Galatians 6

First and foremost, the church needs to listen. And by church, I mean the organization and every single person that claims to be a follower of the risen Lord, Jesus Christ. Listening is such an important and, at some levels, easy skill. Before the church acts on a problem or suffering, stop. Stop and listen to those suffering. Listening is not just hearing about suffering and then acting on it, but it is hearing the suffering. Subtle, yet essentially different. The ones that hear about suffering hear that, for example, a country suffers from extreme poverty causing hunger and, sometimes, death. The church then hears about the suffering and says, "We need to act!" and hurries up by sending food, clothing, and other sorts of resources for the aid of the country. Instead, if the church hears the suffering, they would first listen to the voices of those suffering, ask the pertinent questions, and then aid the suffering on the indigenous people's terms. Granted, depending on the type of suffering and the location of such suffering, the act may need to happen before an in-depth listening takes place. Listening takes time and does not always fit the United States cultural mode of "helping" people. Even so, this applies to those suffering in the United States itself. If the church wants to help those in their immediate context, the church needs to listen – to hear the suffering. I heard this over and over again from the voices of those in other countries. Listen. The church should not think that helping people through their suffering will be a quick fix. It takes time.

Listening also requires the church to not speak. This may seem counterintuitive since one of the main purposes of the church is to proclaim – to speak. Truly listening to people reveals first how to speak. Bonhoeffer, in his work Life Together, wrote that "…Christians have forgotten that the ministry of listening has been entrusted to them by the one who is indeed the great listener and in whose work they are to participate. We should listen with the ears of God, so that we can speak the Word of God."[52]

A woman born in the United Kingdom, but of Indian descent, recently lost her father to death. During this time, she was away from family and called it a "very difficult suffering" because, as a Christian, her

52 Dietrich Bonhoeffer. *Life Together and Prayerbook of the Bible: Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works Vol. 5* (Fortress Press, 2004), 99.

extended family separated themselves from her. In the Indian culture, family supports each other during a time of loss. She lost that support network after she was baptized (was essentially homeless) and could not re-enter into the community. She is not only suffering the loss of her father, but also the loss of her heritage and family. "Thankfully," she said, her father came to Christ before he died. But when her church family found out about the loss, although well-intentioned, they responded, "well, all is okay then." But, in all actuality, "it is not okay." In response to all of this, she said, "What nobody asks is, 'what can I do so that nobody else has to go through that?' There is a part of us that is gratified when we hear about someone else's suffering."[53] Listen, ask the right questions, and learn.

Second, the church needs to exegete – and not just the scriptures. Listening, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer suggests, cannot be isolated. By itself, listening allows only people to be heard, but not helped.[54] Going beyond Bonhoeffer (or simply just expanding on his section about listening), I suggest that after listening and asking, the church needs to then think about how to act in a particular context or culture. The differences between the United States and India drastically challenges our way of thinking about suffering and how to respond to it. Since the gap of differences between both cultures is visibly wide to people standing on either side, exegeting looks like a necessary step. For instance, one of the practices in India during the time of mourning is for the women to wear white for weeks after their loss to let people know they are mourning.[55] To them, this lets others know they are mourning so that those who are not mourning know to mourn with the one suffering. This type of expression may not directly correlate to a practice in the United States, so proper understanding necessitates exegeting the meaning and significance of the practice. Once the church completes the listening and exegeting process, they now understand that somehow the church needs to come alongside those suffering the loss of a loved one for a much longer time than just the week of the tragedy. The church is now

53 Audio file 006

54 It is no accident that the second service Bonhoeffer lists in his work is helpfulness and the third being speaking.

55 Audio file 006

able to apply the information gleaned from those from abroad. Now, the gap between the two parties narrows when looking within the same context or culture. The concept does not change, however. The church in the United States needs to listen, ask, and then exegete the instances of suffering in order to correctly apply the concept to the particular context. Each individual thinks and feels differently even within the United States, not to mention those of different subcultures (the black community compared to the white community).

Finally, the church needs to apply the information learned from listening, asking, and exegeting. This perhaps is the most straightforward, but at the same time, the biggest area for potential misuse. Sometimes words unnecessarily create more problems either by saying the wrong things with proper intent or by simply talking about the problem and then never doing anything about it! The act can simply be that, an act. A woman from Canada said, "the west wants to help with words or whatever, but lack how to be with; 'just being dead weight in a room sometimes'"[56]

CONCLUSION

In this work, I've shown examples of suffering and how the church responds to that suffering in four main contexts – The United Kingdom, the global south, Greece, and India. The goal of showing these examples is to show that suffering is a relative experience that pertains to extreme loss or gain and pain beyond bearable comfort and expectation. Also, no matter the level of suffering, it is still suffering. The sufferings in each of these contexts ranged from loneliness to war and famine. Suffering manifests itself differently to different people in various contexts. To someone in India, not having enough resources to buy food causes suffering while in Greece, not having enough resources to buy certain types of food causes suffering. Importantly, someone should not say to the Greek person, "pull yourself together! There are people in India without food!" While this may be true and may cause people to have a different perspective (or different bearable comfort and expectation levels) on their situation, it diminishes the Greek persons own experiences which

56 Audio file 0011

at one point may have had plenty but now has very little. Perspective matters, but so does the person's experience in the moment. Change in perspective takes time or may never happen to where they may be able to bear the weight of such extreme loss or gain. For instance, it would be correct to say to an Indian barely able to provide for their family, "pull yourself together! Man does not live by bread alone nor is his home of this world. Suffer for Jesus!" While Christians in India gladly suffer for Jesus, for the most part, they do not wish to suffer and need help through the process. As another example, I experienced suffering in a few instances while on the trip from almost dying (seriously) to feeling lonely. I learned what people meant by loneliness as suffering in my own experience and wrote this in my journal:

> In the worship, we sang the classic song, "I surrender all." Up to this point in my life, I gladly sang this song. I surrender all of my problems, issues, and sins to Jesus. But here, in this place far away from family, friends, and my wife, the song has new meaning. I surrender ALL. That means my wife too. Yes, I know the verse that speaks of hating family if it means loving Jesus. And I always put God first. But here, in this place of missing my wife for six weeks, the song brought tears to my eyes. For in this moment, I got a glimpse into the feelings of those that have to surrender ALL. It gives me an appreciation of my wife and of my Lord Jesus and the cost of following him.

In reference to the church, throughout the interviewing process over the course of several weeks, I conclude that the church is not (or cannot) doing enough. The church is not doing enough about reactively responding to people's suffering nor doing enough proactively setting up a system helping people in times of suffering. We exist, in part, to "rejoice with those who rejoice" and "weep with those who weep."[57] Since we live to be with those that suffer, let us learn from those around the world suffering and how to help them and those around us.

57 Romans 12:15 ESV

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You Must Resist:
Theologically-Grounded Political Resistance in Barth and Bonhoeffer

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ABSTRACT

I argue in this paper that the divergence of the ultimate fates of Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer was the outworking not of differences in their theories of theologically-grounded political resistance, but of the influence their particular historical circumstances had on their theologies. I critically compare the political theologies of Barth and Bonhoeffer, with a special focus on their views of political authority and the Christian's ability or duty to resist such, and argue that there is nothing inherent to their theologies that led them down such different paths. Rather, the difference in their destinies is based in historical contingencies.

Destiny for some is to save lives,
But destiny for some is to end lives,
But there is no end
And I will see you in far-off places.[1]

Karl Barth died in his sleep on December 10, 1968, at his home in his beloved Basel, Switzerland. The evening before his death, he had encouraged his lifelong friend Eduard Thurneysen that he should not be downhearted, "[f]or things are ruled, not just in Moscow or in Washington or in Peking, but things are ruled—even here on earth—entirely from above, from heaven above."[2] He was composing a lecture he would never end up actually giving, but in writing his last paragraph on earth, the thought from his pen is clear: "In the church that is in the process of turning round the saying is true that 'God is not the God of the dead but of the living.' 'All live to him…'"[3]

The better part of twenty-four years before Barth's peaceful demise, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was stripped and led to the scaffold at the Flossenbürg concentration camp. A mere twenty-one days before the self-inflicted demise of *Der Führer* himself, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was executed by the faltering Nazi government by hanging at dawn. His family, far from being at his deathbed, would not learn of his execution until several months afterward. In his last missive to his parents—indeed, the last reputable words we have from him at all—he offered none of the profound theological thinking for which he has become so renowned, but rather a request that his mother give away some of his old clothes and bring him some toothpaste and coffee beans upon the sending of their next covert "care package".[4] Something happened on the way to those gallows.

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1 Morrissey, "I Will See You in Far-Off Places," from *Ringleader of the Tormentors.* CD. London: Attack Records, 2006.

2 Barbara Zellweger, "Biography," *The Center for Barth Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary* [home page on-line]; available from http://barth.ptsem.edu/karl-barth/biography ; Internet, accessed 29 January 2018.

3 Karl Barth, *Final Testimonies*, ed. Eberhard Busch, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 60.

4 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters & Papers from Prison* (New York City: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 401.

Herein I will argue that the difference in destinies between Barth and Bonhoeffer is the outworking not of differences in their theories of theologically-grounded political resistance, but of the influence their particular historical circumstances had on their theologies. I will critically compare the political theologies of Barth and Bonhoeffer with a special focus on their views of political authority and the Christian's ability or duty to resist. I will argue that there is nothing inherent to Bonhoeffer's political theology that led him to the scaffold at Flossenbürg when compared to Barth's; rather, the divergent course of the two men's lives was a result of their historical circumstances. I will finally consider the effect this may have on our perception of both men and conclude that we are better off with this nuanced view.

For Karl Barth, the state is no mere political entity but a spiritual creature itself, "one of those angelic powers (exousia) of this age, which is always threatened by 'demonization'…"[5] This last point will come to bear on Barth's theory of legitimate political resistance, but here Barth makes it clear that the power of the state "belongs originally and ultimately to Jesus Christ; that in its comparatively independent substance, in its dignity, its function, and its purpose, it should serve the Person and the Work of Jesus Christ and therefore the justification of the sinner."[6] To Barth, the state exists within the Christological sphere, if a little lower than the church; in line with Romans 13, the state derives its concrete authority and ordained powers from the God "who cannot be understood apart from the Person and the Work of Christ".[7] It is an institution of God and therefore worthy of respect, "[f]or in the view of the Church, the authority of the State is included in the authority of their Lord Jesus Christ."[8] In fact, though the state can become "demonic" and rebel against the authority of God, it cannot not serve God. A true and just state for Barth is one that renders to the church "its true and lawful freedom, 'that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and

5 Karl Barth, "Church and State," in *Community, State, and Church*, ed. Will Herberg (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960), 107.

6 Ibid., 118.

7 Ibid., 120.

8 Ibid., 140.

honesty' (I Timothy 2:2)."[9] "But the Church honours the State even when this expectation is not fulfilled."[10] Even a demonic state may will evil and yet be constrained to do good: Barth exegetes this from the story of Jesus and Pontius Pilate in John 18-19 and cites another example in the comparison of Pilate's actions to the collapse of the Tower of Siloam in Luke 13:1-5.[11] Even if the demonic state acts unjustly and persecutes the church, it may end up doing more good for it than harm to it when the persecution amplifies the witness of the church and the proclamation of the gospel. Even the fact that Pilate used his power as malignantly as he did "could not alter the fact that this power was really given him 'from above.'"[12]

The Christian's response to the state for Barth, then, is first and foremost a prayerful one. "Far from being the object of worship, the State and its representatives need prayer on their behalf. In principle, and speaking comprehensively, this is the essential service which the Church owes to the State. This service includes all others."[13] Moreover, if the state refuses the church its "true and lawful freedom", the church is not freed from its priestly duty to pray but rather must double down on it. "[T]he most brutally unjust State cannot lessen the Church's responsibility for the State; indeed, it can only increase it."[14] The church's respect for the state's authority goes hand-in-hand with the priestly function it fulfills in prayer. Moreover, it is precisely because of this respect that Christians must also intercede when the state attempts to curtail the church's ability to witness. In this seemingly innocent caveat we might see the foundation laid for a Barthian theory of theologically-grounded political resistance. This intercession is still, he claims, the "subjection" required of Christians under the state as enunciated in Romans 13; it simply means that Christians "can not [sic] mean that they accept and take upon themselves responsibility for those intentions and undertakings of the State which directly or indirectly

9 Ibid., 119.
10 Ibid., 140.
11 Ibid., 108-114.
12 Ibid., 113.
13 Ibid., 136, emphasis in original.
14 Ibid.

are aimed against the freedom of preaching."[15] In accordance with his notion that the state cannot not do God's will even when attempting to do otherwise, Barth stresses that Christians' "submission, their respect for the power of the State to which they continue to give what they owe, will consist in becoming its victims…"[16] In this sense, resisting a corrupted state bent on the suppression of Christianity is not necessarily resisting at all, as we have come to think of it: "All this will be done, not *against* the State, but as the Church's service *for* the State!"[17] In its intercessions and willing victimhood the church is actually working for the betterment of the state. "If the State has perverted its God-given authority, it cannot be honoured better than by this criticism which is due to it in all circumstances."[18] In this way Barth tempers a more radical notion of resistance and establishes an essentially conservative political theology. He is at pains to point out that we do not have the right to be anti-state in a knee-jerk fashion: "[T]here is clearly no cause for the Church to act as though it lived, in relation to the State, in a night in which all cats are grey. It is much more a question of continual decisions, and therefore of distinctions between one State and another, between the State of yesterday and the State of to-day."[19]

Yet Barth does allow for the possibility that "the State, from being the defender of the law, established by God's will and ordinance, could become 'the beast out of the abyss' of Revelation 13, dominated by the Dragon, demanding the worship of Caesar, making war on the Saints, blaspheming God, conquering the entire world."[20] Indeed, though Barth is undoubtedly primarily concerned with the more inwardly-focused aspects of the church's resistance, in such a dire situation where the 'the beast out of the abyss' rears its frightful head, Barth realizes the validity of theologically-grounded political resistance. This is no "mere" state persecution of the church against which the church might fulfill a Christianly duty by admonishing the state, praying for it, and

15 Ibid., 138.
16 Ibid., 139.
17 Ibid., emphasis mine.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., 119-120.
20 Ibid., 115.

witnessing in its persecution such that the oppression actually works for God's glory. Against the totalizing state that came to power in Nazi Germany, Barth did hold out the possibility under certain conditions of genuine political resistance based heavily in his Christology.

It is worth noting here that Barth did not simply develop this idea after losing his professorship in Bonn in 1935 for refusing to sign an unqualified loyalty oath to Hitler. Though as a Swiss he may have avoided the most pernicious effects of the Reich's rise, he was hardly unaffected by the Nazis' rise to power; in fact, he hardly remained neutral in the proceedings, having published in 1933 his prophetic *Theological Existence Today! A Plea for Theological Freedom* pamphlet that sounded the alarm against the Nazi rise to power and the German Christians' willingness to accommodate it. Subsequently, Barth was largely responsible for the writing of the Theological Declaration of Barmen, a confession of faith which (in very Barthian language) accepts the divine ordination of the state as an instrument of judgment and peace but simultaneously rejecting the notion that the state can fill the church's vocation or that the church should become an apparatus of the state. The Barmen Declaration became one of the founding documents of the Confessing Church of Germany in which Bonhoeffer would later play such a pivotal role.

Indeed, Barth mitigates the possibility of theologically-grounded political resistance consistently throughout his writings; he neither acceded to the Nazi ascent from the relative safety of Switzerland nor condemned it with 20/20 hindsight, but maintained a vigorous Christology that underpinned this political possibility even through capricious historical circumstances. Even in the postwar period, where one might have expected a lesser theologian to say "I told you so" in the wreckage wrought by the Reich, he carefully couches his language. In 1962, when asked about the existence of the church in a totalitarian state, he immediately surmises that the question was really asked about the existence of the church under Soviet-style communism in the wake of the building of the Berlin Wall. "For the church in a totalitarian world and in a totalitarian state there is only one possibility—one alone, but it

is a genuine possibility."[21] This possibility is to simply be church; he cites the use of *circuitus* in the Vulgate of Mark 3:34, when Jesus calls those kindred who do the will of God, to denote that the church is "those who are around Jesus and whom he looks at around him."[22] The danger, he insists, is not necessarily the totalitarian state, but a totalitarian society in a totalitarian world. "In that case… the church is powerful and perhaps the only powerful thing in a world that is powerless insofar as it has been overwhelmed and is ruled by the powers…"[23] In this sense the church simply acting as church—those who look at Jesus as he looks at them—is a form of countercultural resistance. But there is no denying the state: "A Christian will affirm the State in every form," he proclaimed in a not-dissimilar setting in 1959.[24] After all, "[E]ven the revolutionary does not deny the State. He does attack it, but in another way."[25] Yet even in his refusal to call for rejection of the totalitarian Communist regimes then growing in power in Eastern Europe, he declares that, "It was different at the time of National Socialism. An acute danger prevailed then."[26] "The situation in Germany at that time was not the same. There was nevertheless a church then that was still able to speak but did not speak… It was a difficult time—for reasons different from what makes things difficult in the East today."[27] Here we would do well to notice Barth's characteristic reticence to draw absolute conclusions across time and space, and he is clear that the Christian never abdicates her duty to continue praying for the state: "It is also possible to work actively against the State for the renewal of the form of the State because things

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21 Karl Barth, "Conversation with the Evangelical Book Dealers," trans. John Burgess, TH 92 – *Political Theology Barth/Bonhoeffer Resources* [home page on-line]; available from https://my.pts.edu/ICS/Portlets/ICS/Handoutportlet/viewhandler.ashx?handout_id=77b1d0fc-eadd-4f4c-8d5c-59639cd09c2d5 ; Internet; accessed 3 February 2018, 5.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Karl Barth, "Conversation in the 'Zofingia' I," trans. John Burgess, TH 92 – *Political Theology Barth/Bonhoeffer Resources* [home page on-line]; available from https://my.pts.edu/ICS/Portlets/ICS/Handoutportlet/viewhandler.ashx?handout_id=e80b85f1-f8b3-4e8e-a48b-02bd9154159c ; Internet; accessed 4 February 2018, 3.

25 Ibid., 5.

26 Ibid.

27 Barth, "Conversation with the Evangelical Book Dealers," 9.

can no longer go on in this way. The Christian will [however] in every circumstance pray for the responsible people of the State."[28] When the National Socialists marched in, "The lesson at that time was: 'You must resist!' And the lesson for today goes perhaps more in the direction of the First Letter of Peter: Now has come the time for patience and suffering. Both are forms of the one Christian possibility."[29] Most notable here is Barth's drawing a distinction about the resistance he advocates for the church under the Iron Curtain and the resistance to the Nazi regime from years past. By noting the "acute danger" the Nazis posed, he leaves the door open for a more potent, more active resistance.

You must resist. What was it about the National Socialist regime that led Barth to approve, if tentatively, political resistance against it? How was this particular state different from those against whom he had previously advocated only "resistance" in the form of willing victimhood? Did Barth really have to witness the atrocities committed by the Nazi state in order to glibly approve post hoc resistance against it? Hardly, for the possibility of theologically-grounded political resistance exists in the younger Barth as well. The difference for him between even the worst hypothetical states and the Third Reich appears to be the monopolizing of the Christian church in Germany, as represented by the German Christians who saw no contradiction between their faith and their support of Hitler and his policies. If this were a simple case of the regime coming down on the church, like so many others throughout history, then perhaps Barth would have only accepted Christian resistance insofar as it bore witness to the perversity of the state (for the state's own good, of course) and adhered to the subjection seemingly mandated by Romans 13. Yet, as Barth writes, the more "the current German ideological state… [ascribes] divine power to itself, the more illusionary is the possibility of a Christian decision that does not include

28 Barth, "Conversation in the 'Zofingia' I," 4.

29 Barth, "Conversation with the Evangelical Book Dealers," 9.

within itself a political decision."[30] Certainly Barth is still suspicious of unthinking blanket resistance to government; he still warns that "the church, now as before, may not do politics."[31] Yet he also appears to leave open space for Christian political resistance where little seemed available before, and this open space is strongly informed by Barth's Christology. A commitment to Christ entails with it a commitment to the authority that God has ordained on earth to establish the rule of law, and the church operates in various ways within that established framework. In this way every Christian is responsible for the state's commitment to rule by law; where this rule does not exist, then, it is the Christian's responsibility to struggle against it, a responsibility that implies "active political action that can and must also mean political struggle."[32] So too does the self-divinization of the Nazi state affect the previously-advocated inward responsibility for the Christian: How can the church witness to and admonish the corrupted state when the church is the corrupted state, or at least politically inextricable from it? It may be one thing to support the existence of even a bad state due to one's commitment to Christ—but what if that state goes so far as *to take the place of Christ*? Barth goes further down this rabbit hole, building on his earlier assertions that it is the Christian's duty to constantly pray for the state: "serious prayer in the long run cannot remain without exertion," that is, not without political "attitude" and a "real deed."[33] Is it possible that we see here the distinction Barth drew between what he would later call the two "forms of the one Christian possibility", that is, "patience and suffering"? What does this mean for the church *qua* the church? "If active political resistance follows from the church's proclamation and prayer, then the question poses itself whether the church in its *proclamation* most not legitimate the resistance that is asked of all Christians when they are confronted 'with a government of

30 Wolf Krötke, "Theology and Resistance in Karl Barth's Theology," trans. John Burgess, TH 92 – *Political Theology Barth/Bonhoeffer Resources* [home page on-line]; available from https://my.pts.edu/ICS/Portlets/ICS/Handoutportlet/viewhandler.ashx?handout_id=972a8635-1183-4354-8ba8-97bb30f8a7b3 ; Internet; accessed 7 February 2018, 9.

31 Ibid.

32 Krötke, 10.

33 Krötke, 10-11.

liars, violators of trust, murderers and arsonists.' Must not the church's prayer simply become 'a prayer for the elimination of the possessors of power'?"[34] Are we to keep the *ultima ratio* of violent resistance in our wheelhouse? We will leave these questions open for the moment to shift gears.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was certainly influenced by Barth in many ways, not least in his ideas of theologically-grounded political resistance. In a certain sense, Bonhoeffer was ahead of the game; "already in 1933 Dietrich Bonhoeffer knew to pose to world Christianity the alternative 'Christian or National Socialist.' Barth, despite his clear rejection of National Socialism, was at that time not yet as pointed as he would be in 1938-39."[35] To read Bonhoeffer, one might not have seen this coming. Indeed, his conservatism toward ruling authorities, if not cued directly by Barth, is at the very least Barthian in its orientation. Bonhoeffer first articulates many of these ideas in his 1933 essay "The Church and the Jewish Question", grounding the legitimacy of government on how it fulfills its purpose in God's creation, a contingency that would prove crucial in his later writings on the subject.[36] Drawing a distinction between the state (the governors and the governed) and the government (only the governors), Bonhoeffer asserts that "[g]overnment is the power set in place by God to exercise worldly rule with divine authority. Government is the vicarious representative action of God on earth. It can only be understood from above."[37] This idea of government "from above" is key to Bonhoeffer's general opposition to popular resistance; he takes to task the Aristotelian/Thomistic/Lutheran conception of government as grounded in nature—whether it results in a "rational state", a "people's state", a "Christian state", or otherwise—because it constructs government "from below" and then imbues it with the state's coercive power.[38] It is also a telling phrase we might recognize

34 Krötke 11.

35 Krötke, 6-7.

36 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "A Theological Position Paper on State and Church," in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, Volume 16: Conspiracy and Imprisonment, 1940-1945, ed. Mark S. Brocker, trans. Lisa E. Dahill and Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 502, footnote 1.

37 Ibid., 504.

38 Ibid., 505-508.

from Barth's "Church and State" when he discusses how Pilate, "in deflecting the course of justice… became the involuntary agent and herald of divine justification…"[39] In line with this Barthian notion, Bonhoeffer rejects the "from below" approach that seeks to ground government in anything but divine mandate. "When the state becomes the fulfillment of all spheres of human life and culture, it forfeits its true dignity, its specific authority as government."[40] Instead it must exist "from above"; the Edenic fall from grace makes divinely-mandated government necessary so that this government may use the sword to protect humanity from the effects of sin. Though the relationship of the pastoral office (itself divinely-ordained) to the government is different from the people's relationship to it, both are subjugated under the rule of Christ: "[I]t is therefore under no circumstances possible to speak theologically of government apart from Jesus Christ nor, since he is indeed the head of his church, apart from the church of Jesus Christ."[41] The attentive reader will hear in this statement clear echoes of Barth's Christological proclamation of state authority vested in the God "who cannot be understood apart from the Person and the Work of Christ".

So too do Bonhoeffer's conclusions about the possibility of theologically-grounded political resistance take due account of historical circumstance to avoid a rash anti-government stance. The governmental office has a historical being; "[t]hrough an ethical failure it does not yet lose eo ipso its divine dignity."[42] Furthermore, "[e]ven where government becomes guilty, ethically assailable, its power is from God. It has existence only in Jesus Christ, and through the cross of Christ is reconciled with God."[43] In this talk of the state's historical being, we may see parallels to Barth, who cautioned against the church's treating the state as if it were "a night in which all cats are grey" and advocated for "continual decisions" that treat the state not as a monolithically monstrous entity but as a historically situated one to which our responses need to be perpetually reevaluated. We also may read a Barthian influence here in

39 Barth, "Church and State," 113.
40 Bonhoeffer, "A Theological Position Paper on State and Church", 508.
41 Ibid., 510-11.
42 Ibid., 513.
43 Ibid., 514.

Bonhoeffer's view that even guilty states have divine ordination: Recall that in Barth even a perverted state still cannot fail to enact God's plan in the world, and that the Christian's response must be prayer, witness, and admonishment—at least to a certain point. In this vein does Bonhoeffer warn against judging the legitimacy of a state based on a singular political decision, so entangled is the government with the guilt of the past, lest we label all cats grey.

This Bonhoeffer may seem far removed from both the 1933 Bonhoeffer who drew a dichotomous line between the Christian and the National Socialist and the 1940 Bonhoeffer who began a "double life", becoming increasingly entwined in the circles conspiring against Hitler. Yet, like Barth, Bonhoeffer's seemingly impregnable fortress of divinely-ordained government has an escape hatch. Much like Barth's "beast out of the abyss" from Revelation 13, in the face of which theologically-validated political resistance is possible, Bonhoeffer too allows for the possibility that a "complete apostasy from [the government's] task would call its being into question", though he surmises, at least at this point, that "by God's providence this complete apostasy is only possible as an eschatological event", which "leads to the church-community's complete separation from the government as the embodiment of the anti-Christ" under severe martyrdom.[44] Though he shares with Barth an inclination here toward apocalyptic language from Revelation, Bonhoeffer is perhaps more conservative here, appearing to consent to active resistance only in a truly eschatological circumstance. Still, the fact that he considers the very possibility informs how we may read his later work on the subject. Moreover, later in the same work, though he asserts that the claim of government is the claim of God and therefore binding on the Christian's conscience, he further writes that "[t]he duty of Christians to obey binds them up to the point where the government forces them into direct violation of the divine commandment, thus until government overtly acts contrary to its divine task and thereby forfeits its divine claim."[45] Perhaps Bonhoeffer still believes that this governmental abuse of its divine sanction is still only an eschatological possibility; however, "if

44 Ibid.
45 Ibid., 516-17.

government oversteps its task at some point—e.g., by making itself lord over the faith of the church-community—then at this point it is indeed to be disobeyed for the sake of conscience and for the sake of the Lord."[46] Where Bonhoeffer might have seemed more conservative than Barth—who uses eschatological language to speak of a time of resistance but does not proclaim, as did Bonhoeffer, that such action is *limited* to the eschaton—he ends up ceding more theoretical ground to the possibility of political resistance.[47]

Though arguing strongly for the divinely-ordained foundation of the state and setting relatively firm limits for the church's ability to resist it, Bonhoeffer found himself not only in a position of resistance to the Nazi regime but in an actively conspiratorial role against the Reich for which he would eventually pay his life. Helpful here is Bonhoeffer's discussion of "ultimate" and "penultimate" things to understand why he decided that, in line with his convictions expressed above, the Nazis had to be disobeyed "for the sake of conscience and for the sake of the Lord." The ultimate for Bonhoeffer is, naturally, justification of the sinner by grace alone through faith, with the love and hope that indubitably accompany it. This justification is ultimate both qualitatively (in that no word of God goes beyond God's grace, and that this cannot be forcibly extracted from God by our own methods) and temporally (in that it is preceded by the penultimate, because that which has come under indictment happened in time). "So heaven is torn open above us humans, and the joyful message of God's salvation in Jesus Christ rings out from heaven to earth as a cry of joy. I believe, and in believing I receive Christ, I have

46 Ibid., 517.

47 Barth not only does *not* limit the separation and resistance of the church to the event of the government's eschatological apostasy, but actually states that *these circumstances have already been realized at least once*. In the same passage where he speaks of the state's becoming "the beast of the abyss" of Revelation 13, he writes that the state had *already* become demonic "as represented by Pilate which crucified Jesus." (Barth, "Church and State," 115.) This is not to say that Barth advocates here for active resistance against "demonic" states, but only to demonstrate that he uses quite similar language to Bonhoeffer in—at least originally—a narrower sense.

everything. I live before God."[48] The ultimate is thus an accessible idea to the Christian. The penultimate, however, is more difficult to suss out, and we tend to understand it in one of two extreme ways. The first of these is the *radical* solution, which "sees only the ultimate, and in it sees only a complete break with the penultimate."[49] Under this understanding Christ judges and destroys everything penultimate, which in relation to human behavior is nothing but sin and denial. "What will happen to the world as a result is no longer important; the Christian has no responsibility for that. The world must burn in any case."[50] The other extreme solution is *compromise*, where the ultimate is divorced entirely from the penultimate. "The ultimate stays completely beyond daily life and in the end serves only as the eternal justification of all that exists, as a metaphysical cleansing of the indictment that burdens all existence."[51] Important for Bonhoeffer's political theology of resistance is that he rejects both radicalism and compromise as extreme because they make the ultimate and the penultimate mutually exclusive. By this separation they do disservice to both by wrongly absolutizing one idea and abolishing the other, and in this they dissolve the unity of God. Instead of either of these false solutions, we must turn to Christ. "In Jesus Christ God's reality and human reality take the place of radicalism and compromise."[52] If the ultimate and penultimate come together in the person of Christ, then both must be taken seriously.

Through the lens of theologically-grounded political resistance, Bonhoeffer's discussion of the ultimate and penultimate and the inadequate solutions of radicalism and compromise become quite telling. Resistance to the National Socialist regime under a radical orientation would value the ultimate only, in defiance of everything penultimate; the problems created by the sociopolitical machinations of the Nazi state are penultimate matters that the Christian can refrain

48 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Ultimate and Penultimate Things" in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, Volume 6: Ethics, ed. Clifford J. Green, trans. Reinhard Krauss, Charles C. West, and Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 148.

49 Ibid., 153.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid., 154.

52 Ibid., 155.

from confronting, for "[t]he world must burn in any case." In rejecting the radical Bonhoeffer therefore rejects the quietist view that would keep the Christian pigeonholed and silent in the face of such atrocities. Contrariwise, resistance to the Third Reich under a compromising orientation would divorce the ultimate from the penultimate in principle and let the penultimate stand on its own; the Christian cannot step away from the penultimate but is rather stuck squarely with it and little else, since the ultimate is inaccessible and only conceptually relevant. In rejecting compromise Bonhoeffer therefore rejects the worldly view that would set the Christian afloat in a sea of troubles with no ultimate anchor and no safe harbor. What is left is resistance in the name of Christ, a resistance that takes seriously the penultimate matters of the world but grounds them thoroughly in the ultimate, a resistance that finds unity in the ultimate and penultimate just as they find unity in Christ. "The way for the word must be prepared. The word itself demands it."[53] This does not mean that we ourselves must put the world in order for Christ to come, but that spiritual preparation of the way will be followed by Christ's parousi,a in grace. The fact that no one can hinder the coming of Christ, who breaks through every barrier, does not absolve us of responsibility for preparing the way for him. For Bonhoeffer, this preparation is repentance that demands deeds.[54]

If this Christological focus for resistance sounds familiar, it is because Barth had already laid the groundwork for it. Though he does not explicitly couch the matter in Bonhoeffer's language, it is too for Barth the ultimate that determines the penultimate; specifically, it is Christ that is the foundation of the divine mandate that alone gives legitimacy to a state, and "it is therefore under no circumstances possible to speak theologically of government apart from Jesus Christ…" Unsurprisingly, Christ is at the center of Barth's theory of theologically-grounded political resistance as well, since the "acute danger" that prompted him to advocate resistance against the Nazis is the self-divinization of the Reich over against Christ, creating a situation in which a conservative interpretation of Romans 13 can no longer carry the day. Where

53 Ibid., 160.
54 Ibid., 165.

Bonhoeffer speaks of "repentance that demands deeds", we may think of Barth arguing that "serious prayer in the long run cannot remain without exertion," political "attitude" and "real deed."

Yet one more step remained for Bonhoeffer to realize the full implications of his political theology. In "History and Good", Bonhoeffer dismisses systematic attempts at doing ethics because such abstract conceptions of the good recklessly encourage pursuit of the individual realization of ethical ideals instead of considering ethical responsibility within a historical context. "That is why this understanding of ethics is doomed to fail. It fails due to the *historicity [Geschichtlichkeit] of human existence*."[55] (In this we see again Bonhoeffer's—and Barth's—insistence that decision-making, especially that concerning resistance against the state, is inherently historically conditioned.) In this historicity we live between the No that accompanies the mark of death and the Yes of creation, reconciliation, and redemption that exist in Christ, who said, "I am the Life."[56] Because Jesus is the Life, "[w]e live by responding to the word of God addressed to us in Jesus Christ."[57] This word of God, in turn, charges us with responsibility for others, and when we accept this, our genuine ethical situation comes to the fore. Acting out of concrete responsibility within a historical situation is to act in freedom, putting aside preconceived principles because even servitude to the "absolute good" can produce evil! But responsible action in accordance with reality does not entail total casuistry: Within our historical situation, we neither blindly serve the status quo nor act reactionarily against it, instead finding a middle way of true resistance.

If we have been paying attention to Barth and Bonhoeffer all along, we should realize immediately in what, or in whom, this middle way, this responsible action in accordance with reality is grounded: Jesus Christ, God becoming human and thereby affirming humanity, taking on himself the curse of the divine No. To act responsibly, Bonhoeffer explains, is to act in accordance with human reality, just as God took

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55 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "History and Good," in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, Volume 6: Ethics, ed. Clifford J. Green, trans. Reinhard Krauss, Charles C. West, and Douglas W. Stott (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 220, emphasis original.

56 John 11:25; John 14:6.

57 Bonhoeffer, "History and Good," 254.

on human reality in the person of Christ. If acting responsibly in such a way is grounded in Christ, then doing so entrusts our responsible action to God, because our actions are limited in scope and cannot be the ultimate arbiter of its own rightness or wrongness. Responsible action "must completely surrender to God both the judgment on this action and its consequences… Ultimate ignorance of one's own goodness or evil, together with dependence upon grace, is an essential characteristic of responsible historical action."[58] Jesus did not come to found a new ethical ideology for our historical reality, nor does he divinely sanction all that exists. Since Jesus experienced reality as a human being, action in accord with reality, in accord with Christ, does not rest in any ethical principle but rather the *person* of Christ.[59] Action in accordance with reality should never, therefore, lead to enthusiastic revolution nor quietism but instead to a refocusing on our responsibility on Christ alone. Neither a blindered focus on the ultimate (the radical) nor a weak-kneed reliance on the penultimate (the compromise) can be the basis of resistance. If we are to disobey, if we are to resist, we must forego one-size-fits-all ethical principles and concentrate solely on the person of Christ within our particular historical circumstance. We must risk a free venture of responsibility to do so. "The refusal to obey within a specific historical political decision of the government, as well as the decision itself, can only be a venture of one's own responsibility."[60] This venture, made in freedom and then placed into the hands of God with no guarantee of guiltlessness, is what would lead Bonhoeffer to the gallows that April morn.

In June 1939, mere months before the Nazi invasion of Poland that would once and for all set off the Second World War, Bonhoeffer was living in New York and was offered a job by the Federal Council of Churches to coordinate work with German refugees in the city. He declined the offer for reasons not entirely known even to him: Keeping with his persistent theological conviction that we must act in a venture of free responsibility and leave the rest to God, he journaled that "[w]e are acting in a plane that is hidden from us, and we can only ask

58 Ibid., 225.
59 Ibid., 229.
60 Bonhoeffer, "A Theological Position Paper on State and Church", 518.

that God may judge and forgive us."[61] Writing that same night to his colleague Reinhold Niebuhr, he is emboldened:

> I have made a mistake in coming to America. I must live through this difficult period of our national history with the Christian people of Germany. I will have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people. Christians in Germany will face the terrible alternative of either willing the defeat of their nation in order that Christian civilization may survive, or willing the victory of their nation and thereby destroying our civilization. I know which of these alternatives I must choose; but I cannot make the choice in security![62]

We may hear here once more the assurance with which Bonhoeffer speaks of his decision, even though (as one might well expect) he "cannot make the choice in security", that is, he must make the choice even though he is unsure how God will judge his action. But there is more than assurance in Bonhoeffer's written voice here: There is clear resonance with Barth's own earlier rebuke of Bonhoeffer when the latter had tentatively accepted pastorates at two German Protestant churches in London.

> I truly cannot do otherwise than call to you, 'Get back to your post in Berlin straightaway!' What is this… when you are needed in Germany? You, who know as well as I do that the opposition in Berlin, indeed the church opposition in Germany as a whole, is on such shaky ground spiritually! … Reading your letter, I believe I can see that you, like the rest of us—yes, all of us!—are suffering under the enormous difficulty of "making straight paths for our feet" through the present chaotic situation. But shouldn't it be clear to you that this is no reason to withdraw from the chaos; that perhaps we are called to man our positions in and with our uncertainty, even if we stumble and go astray ten or a hundred times over, or however well or badly we then serve our cause? … No, to all the reasons and apologies that you may still have to offer, I can only and shall always have the same answer: And what of the German church? And what of the German church?—until you are back in Berlin, manning your abandoned

61 Samuel Wells, *A Nazareth Manifesto: Being With God* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 211.

62 Ibid.

> machine gun like a loyal soldier… Since you have written me only that you are now over there, I will write you, for now, nothing more than just this: that you should be back in Berlin.[63]

This is hardly the postwar Barth able to say with no uncertain conviction that the Nazis posed "an acute danger" that necessitated active resistance; this is the 1933 Barth, who lives in the tension between the emphasis in "Church and State" on the God-ordained nature of state authority and the clarion call of warning about the Nazis' encroaching on the church in *Theological Existence Today!* Of course Bonhoeffer's return to Germany, whether from England in 1933 in response to Barth or from America in 1939 as described to Niebuhr, never necessarily entailed that he would end up working in an underground conspiracy dedicated to Hitler's assassination. On the other hand, as we have seen, Barth's political theology played no small part in opening the way for Bonhoeffer's eventual acceptance of the *ultima ratio*.

If there is nothing in Barth's political theology compared to Bonhoeffer's that would have prevented him from making a similar decision to actively resist the Nazi menace by any means necessary, then we may surmise that Bonhoeffer's decision was prompted less by any specifically Bonhoefferian theological impetus and more by the historical circumstances in which he found himself. In his own words—intimately reflective of Barth's earlier words to him—Bonhoeffer feels the pull to suffer through this period of national turmoil with his fellow Christians in Germany. He feels as if he will have nothing to say to the reconstruction of Christianity in Germany after the war if he does not do so, and he casts his die (as later history would demonstrate) to participate in the defeat of the Reich to save Christian civilization. Barth cannot make such a decision, not because his political theology necessarily points him elsewhere, but because he does not and cannot have the same skin in the game, as it were. Barth's outsider status as a Swiss never prevented him from criticizing the Nazis, but he simply did not have the insider opportunities Bonhoeffer had to participate in the conspiracy against Hitler. There is no immediate reason, based

63 Karl Barth, "Letter to Dietrich Bonhoeffer," in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, Volume 13: London, 1933-1935 (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 39-40.

on their respective political theologies, to suspect that Barth would not have made a similar decision if ensconced in Bonhoeffer's circumstances. Recall too that Barth had been summarily dismissed from his position of influence in Germany at Bonn—he himself did not choose to flee. Yet this experience enabled him to realize the potential for theologically-grounded political resistance, a potential whose seeds had laid dormant in his earlier writings and would only come to blossom in the blood-soaked soil when the Third Reich attempted to supplant Christ as the head of the church.

> The fact that he could now say "in safety" what he had to say is surely not insignificant. It naturally makes a difference whether or not one speaks and writes under the conditions of a dictatorship that increasingly shows its murderous face and thus endangers the existence of oneself and others. What Barth had experienced in Germany and then learned about conditions there shaped his theological existence so deeply that it had to have this element of resistance. It was a resistance that he could offer for the German Confessing Church even from another country, and in which now emerged ever more clearly the necessity also of political resistance.[64]

I believe I have demonstrated that Bonhoeffer and Barth were able to make their respective decisions because of their respective historical positions, not because of any preeminent antitheses between their respective (and quite similar, in the end) theories of theologically-grounded political resistance. Moreover, I believe that viewing them and their deeds through the lens of historical circumstance is at least an approximately accurate illustration of how they would have liked themselves viewed, considering the extent to which both of them emphasized the role of historical situation in their evaluations of state and government. When compared to Bonhoeffer, it is tempting to think of Barth as an ivory-tower theologian who fiddled while Berlin (and Warsaw, and Stalingrad, and…) burned. In fact, I argue, he may well have ended up on the scaffold himself were he in Bonhoeffer's shoes, the differentiating factor being time and space and not necessarily theological conviction. This conclusion not only does justice to the important work

64 Krötke, 9.

Barth did for the spiritual opposition to the Nazified German Christians but also gives him his due for his influential work on the possibility and acceptability of the *ultima ratio*. His status as the theological heavy of the twentieth century was earned in more ways than one. This conclusion also avoids the common mischaracterization of Bonhoeffer as a "mere" martyred hero that he himself would have rejected. This is in no way intended as disrespect or a watering-down of his deeds, but rather an attempt to more accurately read how greatly his circumstances affected the course of his theology and do his memory the justice he would have wanted, even if it complicates undoubtedly compelling sermon material. Wracked by guilt at the perceived sinfulness of his deeds, Bonhoeffer could do no other than to act freely in responsibility and to leave the matter ultimately in God's hands. This, I think, is a better model for today's world than a caricature of a Christian champion who simply followed the logical path of his convictions and ended up dying for them. As it often goes, the hero we want is not necessarily the hero we need.

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Lemuel Haynes:
An Early Critic of American Racial Ideology

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I set out to explore the theological thought and social location of Lemuel Haynes, a pastor in 18th and 19th century New England. My specific focus is to analyze the ways in which Haynes' racial identity influenced both his theology and social location in New England theological and social contexts. Coupled with this argument is the argument that the racial ideology led to an incoherent theology among Haynes' contemporaries.

INTRODUCTION

The history of the United States has been intertwined with the ideology of race. Barbara and Karen Fields suggest that both are near twins with regards to their beginning.[1] This has, in turn, bred a unique form of Christianity when compared with the rest of the world. The origins of a racialized Christianity is important for understanding its subsequent development. Furthermore, a much too common historical consciousness often associates racism and its history exclusively with the southern region of the United States. This trend neglects the ways in which race influenced New England and the northern United States. Regionally, New England played a significant role in the formation of the United States, often being the epicenter for revolutionary activity and producing some of the intellects that inspired this movement. Thus a greater consciousness of racism and its history in New England is needed. A thorough study of the early American republic, with a focus on the various cultural factors, might begin to uncover the antecedents to racial, theological, and political ideologies that continue to exercise influence in the United States. A genealogy of ideas and their reception could contribute significantly to historical, theological, and race studies in the United States.

Brevity prevents me from tackling such a comprehensive study. Yet a narrow focus on the life of Lemuel Haynes and the contextual religious and racial ideologies of his time could offer an excellent window into exploring the way in which race and religion interacted in New England during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In this paper I give a contextual analysis of Haynes by tracing the theological thought of New England, with an emphasis on New Divinity Calvinism. Upon locating him within this particular milieu I address Haynes' own life; one which appears to reflect the complicated dynamic of the social application of racial and theological ideologies. It is my contention that Lemuel Haynes' adoption of New Divinity Calvinism informed his commitment to disinterested benevolence that expanded his vision of covenantal communities beyond the racially limited visions

1 Barbara J. Fields and Karen E. Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life* (London: Verso, 2014), 121.

of his co-religionists; conversely it is this very community that deviated from disinterested benevolence into a compensatory benevolence, which created a precarious social status for Haynes.[2]

THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF LEMUEL HAYNES

Haynes inherited a robust theological system that grew out of the Puritan movement in the United States. To understand his place within this stream of thought it is helpful to briefly trace Puritan theological thought up to the time of Haynes. Though I focus on the religious beliefs of Puritans and their successors, it should be noted that religious beliefs can never be fully isolated from political perspectives. Perry Miller notes that we are dealing here with "an age when the unity of religion and politics was so axiomatic that very few men [sic] would even have grasped the idea that church and state could be distinct."[3] It is my intention to provide the theological ground for the social/political philosophy of Puritans. It is difficult to understand the social motivations of 18th century New Englanders without inspecting the theological tradition that gave rise to their ideas. The following is a brief sketch of three essential theological developments that influenced Haynes, namely covenantal theology, regeneration, and providence.

Puritan theology understood sin as a pervasive reality that had to be confronted. This understanding of sin was located within a larger covenantal theology Puritans had developed. Noting the historical tradition of covenantal theology, John Witte observes two unique Puritan ideas regarding covenant: first, God's covenant with humanity was one of works that Adam, the federal head of humanity, failed to uphold thus changing humanity's relationship with the covenant; second, the "covenant of grace," negotiated by Christ, used language of contractual obligation in which both parties were required to uphold their end of

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2 I should clarify my use of disinterested benevolence and compensatory benevolence. The usage of disinterested is to convey that one is not self-interested in their good actions to others. Compensatory benevolence likewise is spoken to communicate the way good actions might become self-serving. This calls into question whether the action could be considered good, but that extends beyond the concerns of this paper.

3 Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1984), 142.

the contract (the implication being God was required to save those who fulfilled the covenant).[4] Inherent in the first idea is the doctrine of original sin. Puritans did not consider the "covenant of works" to be null and void but argued that Christ was needed to "renegotiate" so that humanity, riddled with sin, might participate through faith.[5] Sin, therefore, was a pervasive element of the human experience and this heavily conditioned Puritan thought regarding society. Humanity's sinfulness made centralized power a necessary institution to prevent utter lawlessness.[6] Puritan motivation for this revised covenantal theology was a response to complications within Reformed theology (particularly predestination) that left ambiguities regarding assurance of salvation and the need to behave ethically unresolved.[7]

The need to resolve these tensions greatly influenced the doctrine of regeneration; a doctrine rooted within the history of Puritan covenantal theology. Regeneration was defined as the internal transformation by the Holy Spirit, an idea initially espoused by Heinrich Bullinger and subsequently by Puritans.[8] This idea fit well with covenantal theology as covenants imply conditions.[9] The idea of regeneration could then point to works as a sign of fulfilling covenant obligations. This led to theological tensions that bred further complexity in the New England theological milieu. Jonathan Edwards critiqued the covenantal theology that relied upon works to determine regeneration, and argued that it was a reorientation of love within the individual towards God rather than self.[10] This rejected the covenantal attempt to assure one of salvation.[11] Miller has described this move from Edwards as a return to being an

4 John Witte, Jr. *The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion, and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 289-291.

5 Ibid., 290.

6 Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness*, 142.

7 For the sake of brevity I cannot delve into the complexity of how Puritan covenantal theology answered these ambiguities. For a more complete treatment of the subject see Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness*, 48-98.

8 Paul R. Hinlicky, "The Doctrine of the New Birth from Bullinger to Edwards," *Missio Apostolica* 7.2 (November 1999), 104.

9 Ibid.

10 Hinlicky, "The Doctrine of the New Birth," 114.

11 Ibid.

"authentic Calvinist."[12] One of the driving forces behind Edwards' critique was a firm belief in God's sovereignty; a covenantal theology that made God beholden to the actions of humanity was too high a price to pay for Edwards.[13] Edwards' concept of regeneration was born out of a high sense of God's sovereignty, thus giving birth to a new Calvinist movement in New England.

A radical theology of providence pervaded Edwards' thought and his successors. He was of the persuasion that even if God destined an individual to sin, the individual would still be responsible for their sin.[14] In this system, sin was a result of God's sovereignty, and Samuel Hopkins (a successor of Edwards) argued that "God exercised his benevolence when he 'prefers' that sin exist."[15] This brand of theology was picked up by Edwards' successors commonly known as "New Divinity ministers."[16] Lemuel Haynes was a member of this group, and is often overlooked; his contributions to the New Divinity movement should not be underestimated. It appears Haynes' written works circulated among his friends and acquaintances and have been discovered in collections alongside the likes of Jonathan Edwards.[17] Furthermore, Haynes' critique of Universalism prompted his invitation to preach at Yale, where he left the college's president, Timothy Dwight, in tears.[18]

HAYNES WITHIN THE NEW DIVINITY MOVEMENT

Haynes, raised as an indentured servant, was tutored in Latin and Greek because he was considered to be a promising candidate

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12 Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness*, 98.

13 Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Delta Publishing Co., 1949), 30-31.

14 John Saillant, *Black Puritan, Black Republican: The Life and Thought of Lemuel Haynes, 1753-1933* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 86.

15 Ibid., 87.

16 New Divinity Calvinists is also used. John Saillant, "Slavery and Divine Providence in New England Calvinism: The New Divinity and a Black Protest, 1775-1805," *The New England Quarterly* 68.4 (December, 1995), 584.

17 Saillant, *Black Puritan, Black Republican*, 15.

18 Richard D. Brown, "'Not Only Extreme Poverty, but the Worst Kind of Orphanage': Lemuel Haynes and the Boundaries of Racial Tolerance on the Yankee Frontier, 1770-1820," *The New England Quarterly* 61.4 (December 1998), 514-515.

for ordained ministry.[19] His incredible memory and ability to analyze sermons probably prompted such expectations.[20] The family that raised Haynes experienced their own internal schism of sorts. The Rose family spent Sunday worship between two different congregations; "Deacon Rose" with the "separates," and "Mrs. Rose," accompanied by Haynes, remained with an already established church.[21] It is likely that the "separates" were influenced by Samuel Hopkins, thus New Divinity Calvinists.[22] Despite accompanying Mrs. Rose to church, Haynes fell within the New Divinity camp. He was tutored by Daniel Farrand, and later Job Swift became his "surrogate father;" both were luminaries of the New Divinity school.[23]

In examining the writing and preaching of Haynes, it is easy to note the influence of New Divinity ministers on his own theology. Haynes affirms the total sovereignty of God and the principle of regeneration, as described by New Divinity theologians. In his sermon, "Divine Decrees, an Encouragement to the Use of Means" Haynes makes the argument that God must have permitted evil so that a greater good might be accomplished.[24] In this sermon Haynes goes on to state, "As the whole of God's moral perfections consist in design, so that will be the principal objects of the Christian's love and joy."[25] Here Haynes affirms the idea of the regenerated individual reorienting their love towards God and God's plan for the world. Within New Divinity Calvinism was an understanding that humans love God regardless of whether that love

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19 Saillant, *Black Puritan, Black Republican*, 14.

20 Timothy Mather Cooley, *Sketches of the Life and Character of the Rev. Lemuel Haynes: For Many Years Pastor of a Church in Rutland, VT., and Late in Granville, New-York* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1837), 39-40.

21 Ibid., 39.

22 Thabiti M. Anyabwile, *May We Meet in the Heavenly World: The Piety of Lemuel Haynes* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2009), 3.

23 Saillant, *Black Puritan, Black Republican*, 14.

24 Lemuel Haynes, "Divine Decrees," in *Black Preacher to White America: The Collected Writings of Lemuel Haynes, 1774-1833*, ed. Richard Newman (New York: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1990), 92.

25 Ibid., 93.

guaranteed their salvation; in other words, "disinterested benevolence."[26] Though Haynes agreed on this score with his fellow New Divinity Calvinists, he differed regarding the practical consequences of such a belief.

The source of the theological disagreement is rooted in the presence of racial ideology within New England culture. Slavery and the arguments for a society post-emancipation are the clearest examples for examining this particular racial ideology. A doctrine of providence then becomes the point of departure between Haynes and his contemporaries. To understand the manner in which their disagreement about providence works, one must examine the different ways New Divinity Calvinists argued against slavery and reconciled the existence of slavery with a sovereign God. Here John Saillant's analysis of the disagreement is useful. In general, New Divinity Calvinists were against the slave trade and slavery.[27] To reconcile the existence of these two sins with God's providence, New Divinity Calvinists saw slavery as necessitating a reversal of fortunes (through conversion) that would lead to the Christianization of the African continent (through a process of emigration).[28] The Christianization of Africa was driven by their arguments against slavery, which threatened the Revolution and "could also endanger an ostensibly free, post-Revolutionary society."[29] Coupled with their concern for a post-Revolutionary free society they exhibited a feeling of "unease" with a "mixed-race society."[30] It was this unease that led to their support of an emigration program following emancipation. Saillant is correct in observing that "their theology and racism nourished each other."[31]

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26 John Saillant, "'A Doctrinal Controversy Between the Hopkintonian and the Universalist': Religion, Race, and Ideology in Postrevolutionary Vermont," *Vermont History 61* (1993), 198.

27 Saillant, "Slavery and Divine Providence," 584.

28 Ibid., 596.

29 Saillant, "Slavery and Divine Providence," 592.

30 Ibid., 597. Saillant notes Jonathan Edwards Jr. and Samuel Hopkins as espousing this view, but conveys that this was a common sentiment within the larger revolutionary imagination.

31 Ibid.

Haynes advanced a significantly different argument, one not nearly as concerned about the racial makeup of a post-Revolutionary society. The structure of his argument points to different underlying sentiments from his counterparts. His argument *against* slavery consists of an appeal to natural rights (which extend to all people everywhere), the horrors of slavery and the slave trade, and *countering* arguments for slavery, concluding with a final warning that God punishes sin.[32] Absent in his argument is any anxiety regarding a "mixed-race society" as espoused by his co-religionists. Saillant proposes that Haynes "echoed" his fellow New Divinity Calvinists with regards to "decrying the slaveholders' and slave traders' selfishness…and lamenting the effect of slavery and the slave trade on blacks."[33] This analysis should be nuanced. Haynes might agree with his coreligionists on critiquing the sin of slavery and its cruelty, but the telos is different. His goal is not an emigration movement, but the inclusion of emancipated persons in a post-Revolutionary society.

New Divinity Calvinists understood family as being "the basic unit of human society;" this unit was torn asunder when families were ripped apart by slavery and the slave trade.[34] This is where Puritan covenantal theology reasserts itself in our analysis. While New Divinity Calvinists rejected a vertical covenantal theology (God being contractually obligated to save humanity due to Christ's renegotiated covenant), they maintained a horizontal covenant. As Witte notes, being a "covenant people" required that they be "bound together by covenants with each other."[35] Levi Hart, a New Divinity Calvinist, saw marriage as the fundamental instance of "mutual compact between husband and wife," which slavery blatantly assaulted.[36] Though covenantal theology had been abandoned by New Divinity Calvinists, strands of its thought persisted into the New Divinity movement. Racial ideology caused a

32 Lemuel Haynes, "Liberty Further Extended," in *Black Preacher to White America*, ed. Richard Newman (New York: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1990), 17-30. I have decided to maintain Lemuel Haynes words as presented in Richard Newman's compilation.

33 Saillant, "Slavery and Divine Providence," 600.

34 Ibid., 593.

35 Witte, *Reformation of Rights*, 294.

36 Saillant, "Slavery and Divine Providence," 593.

limitation when it came to the imagination of covenantal boundaries. Viewing family in such high esteem caused many New Divinity Calvinists to place strict structures around the institution. Understanding that a free society required egalitarianism, New Divinity Calvinists expressed a desire to separate people based upon race rather than allow interracial families.[37] Simply, they struggled to imagine an interracially egalitarian society.

One can only imagine what this line of argument meant for Haynes. He was the son of a black father and a white mother.[38] Furthermore, though raised by a white family as an indentured servant, his life was comparably better than many other children of interracial relationships; he even seems to have expressed that his childhood held some resemblance to familial relationships.[39] Though we should not romanticize Haynes' childhood, it does appear that he saw the potential of relationships crossing racial boundaries. His argument reflects this lived experience, while also taking the theological thinking of New Divinity to its logical conclusion. Haynes critique of slavery and the slave trade certainly focuses on its destruction of the family. He points to the pain that parents experience when separated from children and, similarly, when spouses are torn apart because of the slave trade.[40] He further notes how children are raised by people who have "Little, or no Effection for them."[41] Haynes latches onto the family rhetoric but does not do so to tap into racist fears. Instead, he uses it to show the moral corruption inherent in such a trade. Saillant notes that Haynes' rhetoric placed greater emphasis on the emotional trauma of black people than his white abolitionist counterparts.[42] Haynes deployment of divine wrath is coordinated with black suffering when he states, "O! what an Emens Deal of Affrican-Blood hath Been Shed…you may go with impunity here in this Life, yet God will hear the Crys of that innocent

37 Ibid., 597.
38 Saillant, *Black Puritan, Black Republican*, 9.
39 Ibid., 11-12.
40 Haynes, "Liberty Further Extended," 24.
41 Ibid., 23.
42 Saillant, *Black Puritan, Black Republican*, 20.

Blood."[43] Haynes is not interested in spurring change via self-interest (as his contemporaries appear to be) but is seeking to call attention to gross injustices that must be rectified. The conclusion to his treatise "Liberty Further Extended" reads, "the important Caus in which you are Engag'd in is of a[n] Exelent nature…But it is Strange that you Should want the Least Stimulation to further Expressions of so noble a Spirit."[44]Again, the rhetorical move is not to evoke fear over a failed revolution, but press people to take such a revolutionary spirit to its logical end: the liberation of all people.

Haynes can make this move with regards to family and the revolutionary rhetoric because of his expanded view of covenantal communities. In a sermon composed around the same time as "Liberty Further Extended," we see how his idea of covenant relationships expanded beyond the limitations exerted by his contemporaries. The sermon largely grapples with the need and effects of regeneration. In its third section Haynes argues that the regenerate are to unite; this unity is an attempt to mirror the heavenly kingdom.[45] Subsequently, he goes through the application of the sermon in the audience's life. Haynes gives a list of rhetorical questions to evaluate one's regenerated state; one question, in particular, asked, "Have we got that universal benevolence which is the peculiar characteristic of a good man [sic]?"[46] His idea of the regenerate exhibiting universal love should not be divorced from Puritan understandings of covenantal social relationships. The attempt to mirror the kingdom of heaven was the underlying motivation for Puritan social covenants, so that communities could be formed allowing people to live holy lives.[47] In "Liberty Further Extended" Haynes points to this virtue as the solution to slavery, "compassion, which is peculiar to mankind [sic]…Let it run free thro' Disinterested Benevolence. then [sic] how would these iron yoaks Spontaneously fall from the gauled Necks of

43 Haynes, "Liberty Further Extended," 22.

44 Ibid., 30.

45 Lemuel Haynes, "A Sermon on John 3:3," in *Black Preacher to White America: The Collected Writings of Lemuel Haynes*, 1774-1833, ed. Richard Newman (New York: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1990), 36.

46 Ibid., 37.

47 Witte, *The Reformation of Rights,* 295-296.

the oppress'd."[48] For Haynes, the benevolence required of the regenerate knew no racial boundaries, therefore, covenantal communities had no racial boundaries. Disinterested benevolence was not unique to Haynes. Samuel Hopkins espoused a similar idea, but he and other New Divinity Calvinists did not believe this love crossed "racial lines."[49]

It is this difference in structuring arguments against slavery and the slave trade that shaped the goal for what society would look like on the other side of emancipation. This drove Haynes and other New Divinity Calvinists in different directions in terms of theodicy. As mentioned earlier, most of Haynes' contemporaries argued for an emigration movement to Christianize Africa; racial separation defined their view of covenantal communities. Haynes' attempt to espouse a theodicy took a different form, one molded by his understanding of covenantal community and, thus, by his argument against slavery and the slave trade. His solution to this theological problem proposes God using slavery and the slave trade to instruct Americans in the horrors of oppression so that they might "value liberty so highly that they would feel compelled to extend it to others."[50] The modern reader might be taken aback by a pedagogical use of such a wretched chapter in human history. Understanding Haynes' starting point as a New Divinity Calvinist (a theology that understandably garners little popularity in current theology) shows his attempt to envision the greater good that could come from slavery. Haynes believes in a covenantal community bounded together by disinterested benevolence that should not be conditioned by race. For him this is the greatest good that God was crafting out of his immediate social reality. In spite of our possible objections to this theological system, it appears Haynes is a more consistent follower of New Divinity Calvinism than his contemporaries. He understands disinterested benevolence as having power within reality, unaffected by racial ideology. His fellow colleagues are not so swayed by the theology they espoused. This is clearly the result of a pernicious racial ideology pervading early American society.

48 Haynes, "Liberty Further Extended," 29.
49 Saillant, "Slavery and Divine Providence," 605.
50 Saillant, "Slavery and Divine Providence," 601.

LEMUEL HAYNES' SOCIAL REALITY

Up until this point most of my analysis has focused on the theoretical; examining the ways in which people made sense of God, the human condition, and their vision for society. The way in which theory is applied to social reality often yields a multiplicity of results. In the case of New England this is no different. Haynes was constantly navigating the imperfect application of theological and political theories. In this section, I explore the way covenantal boundaries in New England did not engender the broad covenantal boundaries Haynes advocated, or the racially restricted covenantal boundaries that other New Divinity Calvinists advocated. Rather, in Haynes' life one notes a pattern of compensatory benevolence. This compensatory benevolence was a self-interested benevolence that sought to demonstrate one's Christian virtue through actions intended to communicate an individual's ability to overcome racial bigotry. This kind of benevolence is marked by a covering up of racial bigotry that creates a social situation in which prejudice still overshadows relationships.

The beginning of Haynes' life was wrapped in the compensatory benevolence of pre-Revolutionary New England. As Saillant has described, Haynes' childhood as an indentured servant, "fit into a New England sentimental tradition of the informal adoption of black boys and girls, sometimes slaves, sometimes indentured servants, into white families as surrogate children, even occasionally, as the most favored child."[51] Though abandoned at birth, Haynes recalls that the mother of the family he was indentured to was "peculiarly attached" to him, so much so that it was rumored "she loved Lemuel more than her own children."[52] This familial attachment to Haynes did not remove his status as an indentured servant, thus creating a tension of "exploitation and sentiment" within the household.[53] While this created space for Haynes to "leverage" benefits from this family it did not communicate

51 Saillant, *Black Puritan, Black Republican*, 11-12.

52 Cooley, *Sketches of the Life*, 30.

53 Saillant, *Black Puritan, Black Republican*, 12. Lemuel Haynes was not the only black American to benefit from such sentiment, Phillis Wheatley is another notable example. Saillant suggests this trend was not uncommon.

any change in status.[54] I suggest Haynes' childhood serves as an example of compensatory benevolence. In a religious context that was becoming increasingly suspicious of slavery, but increasingly anxious about free black citizens, adherents were trying to split the difference. To appease their theological sentiments they tried to maintain a more familial relationship with indentured servants and slaves. They did so without upsetting societal convention or expectation through continuing to hold people in bondage. Simply, they compromised on the radical demands of their theology at great expense to others.

Haynes was a particularly gifted child, showing incredible promise. His insatiable appetite for learning led him to spend countless evenings reading.[55] However, his promise, though recognized, did not relieve him of the rigors of servitude.[56] This ambiguous relationship allowed him to seize opportunities rare for indentured servants during his time. He was considered a quality candidate for ministry and thus studied under various ministers in New England (turning down an opportunity to study at Dartmouth).[57] His studies eventually led to his certification to preach in 1780.[58] Education of promising candidates was not abnormal. Hopkins aided John Quamine and Bristol Yamma in attaining education, with the goal that they would be ministers in Africa.[59] Hopkins' support was conditioned by a future vision of a Christianized Africa. These attempts were often viewed "as a crucial opportunity for benevolent whites to exercise their virtue."[60] These efforts often led to larger attempts to form missionary societies.[61] However, this pressure did not appear to factor into Haynes' life. It appears New Divinity Calvinists had little influence on the day-to-day functions of churches throughout New England. Therefore the limited covenantal scope of New Divinity Calvinists could not significantly change the direction of Haynes' ministry. Even if those influencing and pushing Haynes to

54 Ibid.
55 Cooley, *Sketches of the Life*, 37.
56 Ibid.
57 Saillant, *Black Puritan, Black Republican*, 84.
58 Ibid.
59 Saillant, "Slavery and Divine Providence," 595.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.

ministry agreed with a limited covenantal scope they were forced to compromise on that point.

As an ordained minister, Haynes forced New Englanders to confront their racial prejudices. Responses could be anywhere from outright prejudice to compensatory benevolence. Often individuals exhibited both responses throughout their time as Haynes' parishioners. His ordination in 1785 was controversial as some parishioners refused to attend.[62] Brown notes that racial prejudice and the "novelty" of a black pastor brought many to hear him preach and kept them captivated due to his ability.[63] His orthodoxy was so respected that whiteness was ascribed to him by parishioners and curious bystanders.[64] In a footnote in Cooley's biography of Haynes, the spouse of a colleague mentions how fellow ministers were eager to volunteer to sleep in the same bed as Haynes when it was necessary for beds to be shared.[65] The footnote came in a story narrating the attention Haynes drew at ecclesial meetings in which "every disagreeable feeling arising from the peculiarity of his situation should be done away."[66] Haynes' abilities as a pastor were certainly prodigious, but they were always remarked upon in relation to his race or the "peculiarity of his situation." Brown suggests Haynes was able to carry out "a partial victory over prejudice."[67] Haynes certainly forced white New Englanders to confront their racial prejudice, but rather than unlearn prejudice it appears mere association with him became a token of their accomplishment as benevolent Christians. His excellence as a minister allowed white New Englanders to suggest that they had lived into the covenantal goals of New England Calvinism without actually embracing the disinterested benevolence that should have been extended to Haynes.

This compensatory benevolence can very quickly turn into bare racial bigotry. Haynes' successes as a pastor and theologian did not prevent dismissal. For example, the parish he served the longest, in Rutland,

62 Brown, "'Not Only Extreme Poverty,'" 512.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 Cooley, *Sketches of the Life*, 214.
66 Ibid.
67 Brown, "'Not Only Extreme Poverty,'" 512.

his parishioners dismissed him ostensibly for his political beliefs, but his side of the story indicates it was due to their racial prejudice.[68] This dismissal came in spite of great success in his career, which included his acclaimed disputation with a Universalist and his preaching at Yale College.[69] His marriage further illustrates the precarious state of his social standing. He married a white woman, Elizabeth Babbit, with whom he had nine children.[70] This occurred in an irregular manner for the time as Babbit proposed to Haynes; yet he still sought the advice and approval of his colleagues before going forward.[71] Haynes was an accomplished individual who proceeded in his daily life with extreme caution due to the racism present in New England society. His accomplishments and caution still did not protect him from prejudice. At best Haynes could be described as tentatively included in the covenantal communities of New England.

CONCLUSION AND PASTORAL APPLICATION

Lemuel Haynes' work and theology should be seen as a response to the influence of racial ideology on his life. Barbara and Karen Fields provide an important framework for approaching race and history. As an ideology, race has its historical origins in early American life, not too distant from the founding of the United States.[72] This ideology clearly shaped Haynes' life. He was not only socially embattled, but theologically as well. Those with whom he agreed were often theological adversaries on significant issues. This is not because their theology was deficient (at least not in Haynes' estimation), but because racial ideology seeped into their understanding of reality. This perception of reality prevented them from following through on their claims to covenantal communities and disinterested benevolence. In a sense, Haynes served as a corrective to a theology veering into a warped thought inundated with racist notions. In other words, he was battling for the soul of New Divinity Calvinism.

68 Brown, "'Not Only Extreme Poverty,'" 515-516.
69 Ibid., 514-515.
70 Saillant, *Black Puritan, Black Republican*, 60.
71 Brown, "'Not Only Extreme Poverty,'" 513.
72 Fields and Fields, *Racecraft*, 121.

As shown by Haynes' life, the social consequences of theological claims made by many white New Divinity Calvinists were exacting. Though unable to enforce their emigration ideal, an often-unwelcoming community levied its own toll on him. In many ways, this was worsened by the communal nature of a theological tradition that had its roots in Puritan ideals—which could have envisioned a more inclusive society that cut across race; instead they became the boundary markers for race. Despite the personal risk, Haynes dedicated himself to transgressing these boundaries. Though forced out of Rutland, the success of his sermons and writings carried some weight in a world defined by whiteness. It is this paradox that represents the illogical nature of racial ideologies. Race seeks to mark out rigid categories for human beings, thus New Divinity Calvinists sought to use race to determine covenantal boundaries. Yet arbitrary categorization cannot capture the essence of a person. Haynes mastered the languages, theology, and preaching requisite to be a minister in early New England society.[73] He defied expectations so much that they were convinced his soul was white.[74] This sort of convoluted thinking becomes possible when people are arbitrarily categorized in hierarchical systems. Haynes certainly challenged New Englanders to redefine what it meant to be part of a covenantal community. His life and work, which set out to correct the theological and social errors of his time, makes him more than an abolitionist. The title of abolitionist could be claimed by racist New Divinity ministers that advocated against slavery while excluding Haynes from their vision of covenantal community. Haynes, however, is separated from his contemporaries, not in his views on slavery, but in his views on race. His work might be considered some of the earliest forms of antiracist thought and activism in the history of the United States.

What does this mean for those engaged in ministry in our current United States context? This question could be applied to many historical studies of Christianity or Christian theology. First, the history surrounding Haynes makes us painfully aware of our limitations as pastors. Often pastors are the most prominent theologians within

73 Haynes learned Latin from Daniel Farrand and Greek from the Rev. William Bradford. Brown, "'Not Only Extreme Poverty,'" 510.

74 Cooley, Sketches of the Life, 81.

their immediate communities, but that does not preclude them from carrying the baggage of any number of ideologies. The racial ideology of American life has been particularly pernicious and persistent. Haynes' context reminds us to engage in self-critical examination. We should ask ourselves what are our underlying motivations for certain theological commitments. It is my hope this essay provokes the reader to think humbly about the theological voices they interact with daily. Benefactors of systemic racism should listen carefully and humbly to those who have suffered because of it. Ignoring or dismissing the voices of the oppressed, like New Divinity Calvinists, warps our theological understanding to the detriment of society and our faith in Christ.

Finally, pastors should familiarize themselves with the genealogy of their respective tradition. In many ways, this is what brought me to read and study Lemuel Haynes. As a Reformed Christian, I was exposed to Haynes as I set out to learn the various responses to the transatlantic slave trade among Reformed Christians. As I dug deeper, I found the complex ways Reformed Christians supported, opposed, and neglected slavery and the consequent racial ideologies. Lemuel Haynes stands out as a prophetic voice convicting my tradition of its shortcomings and he does so standing within it. It suggests that we should never go back to exonerate our traditions, just as we should not completely write off the cloud of witnesses that precede us in the faith. It invites us to deal honestly with our own traditions. I hope this research fills a gap in our knowledge of the Reformed tradition's complicated history in the United States, in addition to it providing a potential model for individuals in ministry to dig into the history of their own traditions. I am confident it can only better inform our ministry.

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PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

SERMONS

AUTUMN 2018 · VOLUME 9

The Lost Sons and the Prodigal God

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ABSTRACT

We often call this the parable of the Prodigal Son, but this title is misleading. The story is about a father and his two sons. Both sons reject their father—one by being very bad and one by being very good. The father, however, continues to extend love and grace to both sons. This parable is the gospel in shorthand.

INTRODUCTION

To understand this parable, you must understand two things. The first is: Who is hearing the parable? The beginning of Luke tells us: "Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them'" (Luke 15:1-2, ESV).

Tax collectors and sinners were a group of people. Tax collectors are not cheats trying to get rich, like a bad used car salesman. They were sell-outs who made money by supporting the occupying armies.[1] They were traitors. They were hated by the community. Sinners were a class of people who, because of illness or livelihood, could never enter the Temple. These were people with deformities and diseases, such as the blind, lame, bleeding, or lepers and with jobs which included prostituting, working as a mercenary for the Romans, and tax collecting.[2]

These people were drawing near to hear Jesus. They were taught that they were outcasts and cursed by God. They can never be made right with God. But they are attracted to the teachings of Jesus and welcomed by him.

The scribes and pharisees represent the other side of spectrum. They were super religious and upright. They believed they had gained favor with God and had a special relationship with God. They questioned why Jesus would associate with tax collectors and scribes. Jesus gives this parable to these two specific groups, and we cannot understand the parable if we do not understand these groups.

The second thing you must appreciate before you can understand the parable is this: Who is the star of the parable? We call this the parable of the Prodigal Son. This is a poor name for the parable and puts us in the wrong mindset to understand it.[3] Jesus introduces the parable by

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1 Matt Chandler, Sermon, "Deconstruct Reconstruct," The Village Church, preached October 6, 2008, website, accessed March 21, 2018, https://d1nwfrzxhi18dp.cloudfront.net/uploads/resource_library/attachment/file/710/200810261100HVWC21ASAAA_MattChandler_LukePt32-DeconstructRecontruct.pdf, 1.

2 Kenneth E. Bailey, *The Cross and the Prodigal: Luke 15 Through the Eyes of Middle Eastern Peasants* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2005), 27.

3 Ibid., 49.

saying, "There was a man who had two sons" (Luke 15: 11). The parable is about the father, and there are two sons, and we are meant to compare the two sons in order to ultimately say something about the father.

THE LOST YOUNGER BROTHER

Let's get into the story. The younger son goes to his father and demands his share of the estate. In those days, your land was who you were. Your land was your livelihood and your family heritage. To help keep the family livelihood together, when a patriarch dies, the property was divided among his sons. This all happened at the father's death. For one to demand the estate while his father was alive was a shameful and terrible thing to do. This was to wish the father dead.[4] It was to say, "I want your possessions, but I don't want anything to do with you."

This is also a very public comment. The father does not have stock or money in the bank. To give the son his share, he must liquidate assets. He must sell part of the property, the vineyard, and the sheep or livestock. Everyone in the community would have known what was happening.

The community expects the father to shame and disown the son. He should chase the son out of the house and never speak to him again. The community will understand. But instead, this father gives this nasty son what he asked for. He divides his property, but the word for property in Greek is bios meaning "life."[5] This is the same word we get the word biology from. A person's property was so much a part of his life that the word for property is the word for life. So, in a sense, the father divides himself. He divides his life for the son who rebels against him. He loves the son even in the son's rejection of him.

The younger brother then goes to a land far, far away and spends all his money on reckless living. This is actually what the word prodigal means. We use the word prodigal to describe rebellious children that leave home, but we do that because of this story. The word actually means to spend lavishly.[6]

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4 Timothy Keller, *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith* (New York, NY: Dutton, 2008), 18.

5 Ibid., 19.

6 Bailey, 53

He spends like crazy. On what we are not told, though the elder brother thinks it is on women. Then a drought hits the land. He is broke. He has no family to turn to in this land. He ends up working feeding pigs and becomes so hungry that he would eat what the pigs were eating. Think about this. Are pigs good or bad animals for Jews? They are bad. They are unclean. Being a pig worker would likely put you in the category of sinner and make you unwelcomed in the temple.

But the son comes to his senses. He hatches a plan. He knows there is no way his father will take him back. That is out of the question. But if he goes back and becomes a hired servant, then he would be able to survive by learning a craft and starting to pay his father back.[7]

Both groups listening to the parable understand this plan. The son must come groveling back, stay in the status of sinner, and work as a servant. The son must spend his whole life trying to come back from his mistakes. The sinners and the tax collectors identify with this because they had been there, too. The priests and scribes recognize this as exactly what those sinners and tax collectors deserve.

But the parable takes a shocking twist. The father sees the younger son a way off in the distance. For how many days had he scanned the horizon, hoping and praying that his son would come home? And when he sees him, he takes off running to him.

Middle Eastern patriarchs did not run. Children ran. Women could run. Young men could run, but patriarchs—no way.[8] You would have to pick up your cloak and expose your legs. But this father runs, embraces his son, and kisses him. This father actually acts more like a first-century mother in this moment.

The son begins his apology and his plan, just as he had been practicing it over and over on the long walk home. But the father will have none of it. He interrupts before the apology even gets going. He tells the servants to bring the best robe—that would have been his robe.[9] And he puts his ring on his lost son. The ring represented the authority of the family. It was also the credit card of the day. It would have had a

7 Bailey, 61.
8 Keller, 22.
9 Ibid., 22.

seal on it that would give the carrier the right to do business in the name of the father.[10]

The father will not even consider making his son a servant. His son is instantly a son again. He then slays the fatted calf. Understand that meat was expensive and would not keep well without refrigeration. A fatted calf was a huge expense and would have fed the whole community. The whole village is invited to the party for the younger son.[11]

THE LOST ELDER BROTHER

The son that was dead is alive. The son that was lost is found. In most interpretations of the parable that should be the end, but there is another part to the story. There is another son.

The elder brother is off working in the fields. No one tells him of his brother's return. The whole community has been invited to a party, but the elder brother does not know about it. He finds out about the party when he hears the music and dancing a long way off. As a necessary note, one knows it is a rocking party when one hears the dancing a mile off. This party is epic.[12]

But when the elder brother hears that the party is for his younger brother, he refuses to go into the party. The father goes out to meet him in the field. This is again a public rejection of the father. This time the rejection is by the elder brother.[13]

Listen again to the elder brother's words: "'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!" (Luke 15:29b-30).

He does not address his father as father but begins with "look." It could be translated into English something like, "Look you!"[14] We can imagine his finger pointed at his father. He says he has served his father these many years. The word is really slaved.[15] He is saying, "I have slaved

10 Bailey, 71.
11 Keller, 23.
12 Chandler, 4.
13 Bailey, 82.
14 Keller, 27.
15 Ibid., 57.

for you for these years, but you never even gave me a goat. But then this 'son of yours' comes back…" He will not call him his brother or use his name. It is "this son of yours." He is outraged at his father's reckless spending and ill-deserved grace.

But the father replies: "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found" (Luke 15:31b-32). He tells this elder brother that all he has is yours. If the elder brother has not enjoyed the Father's possessions it is not because the father was unwilling to give them.

The father is once again rejected by a son that seems to want his belongings but not him.[16] Yet, again, look at the grace of this father. He does not yell at the elder brother or drag him into the party. He goes out and entreats him. He begs him. He pleads with him, "Come to the party. Be part of my joy."

Surprisingly, there is no conclusion to the parable. It simply ends—a cliffhanger that leaves us wondering what happened. Will the elder brother go into the party? But that is the point.

THE PRODIGAL GOD

Do you see what Jesus has done? He has masterfully painted both audiences into the story. The sinners and tax collectors are the younger brother, and the priests and scribes are the elder brother. These younger brothers are coming to Jesus and listening, but the elder brothers in the crowd are judging the younger brothers and Jesus' response to the younger brothers.

The expectations of both sons are blown away. We have two sons—one is very good and one is very bad, but both are alienated from the Father. They did not love the father. They wanted the father's possessions. The sons are both lost. The bad one is lost in his badness, and the good son is lost in his goodness.[17]

Jesus is showing that there are two ways to be lost from God. One way is by being really bad and outright rejecting God, so that you think God could never love or forgive you. The other way of being lost is to

16 Ibid., 38.
17 Ibid., 35.

be so good and holy that you do not think you need God, or you think God should love you. Both are ways of rejecting God.

This seems as wrong to us as we hear the story as it would have for those in the original crowd. The good one should be in and the bad one should be out. But the parable ends with the reverse.

Today you stand in the crowd hearing this parable. Which brother are you? Maybe you are a younger son. You have rebelled. You have run as far away from God as you could, done terrible things, and feel like you could never come back to the love of God.

Or maybe you are the elder brother. You have been good your whole life, never left home, and always volunteered for lots of stuff at church, but you do not have a deep or authentic relationship with God. In fact, when life does not go your way, you get mad at God, because you hold that God owes you something. In fact, you believe God is lucky to have you.

By the way, the Greek word for elder is presbuteros.[18] You may not realize it, but you know this word. Presbuteros is a word used to name a form of church government led by elders called Presbyterianism. The elder brother is the Presbyterian brother. Those of us who are religious can so easily fit into the pattern of this elder brother.

You are meant to see yourself in these sons, but be sure that you do not get too wrapped up in the brothers. Remember, according to Jesus, the star of the parable is the father. And this father is unlike any earthly father, just as this God is unlike any other perspective on God. This father is publicly rejected by two sons who want stuff from him but do not want him. Still, the father does not react in anger, as he rightly could do. Instead, this father extends grace and more grace. He sacrifices and gives and pleads and loves these sons when they deserve the opposite. Remember that the word prodigal actually means to spend lavishly? It is really the father who spends the most lavishly. He represents our prodigal God, who gives and gives to us.

So if you are a younger brother, and you have run the other way and been bad, I want you to hold on to this image of God watching in the distance for you to return and of him running to you and embracing

18 Bailey, 78.

you. You cannot be so bad that this God will not put his cloak on you and welcome you as a son or daughter.

And, if you are that elder brother, that Presbyterian brother, and you have slaved for God but not ever let him be your Father, I want you to hold onto this image of God coming to you and pleading with you to come into the party. The Father says, "Come into the party. All that I have is yours. You are my son. You are my daughter."

That is our God. He sacrifices and spends for us, even dividing his own bios, his own life, on the cross. What will you do with your Heavenly Father?

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Show Invisibles

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ABOUT THE SERMON

Texts: John 1:1-5, 9-14; Heb 1:1-12

Preached December 24, 2017 at First United Methodist Church in Pittsburgh, PA.

Today is the fourth Sunday of Advent. It is also Christmas Eve. That felt odd to me—and sure enough, when I checked, I found that Christmas Eve hadn't fallen on the fourth Sunday of Advent since 2006, and wouldn't again until 2022. I would have thought that Christmas was as likely to fall on a Monday as on any other day of the week, but apparently not—given the vagaries of our calendar, it is slightly less likely for Christmas Day to fall on a Monday (or a Saturday) than on any other day. So this *is* an unusual Christmas Eve, and in keeping with the unusual setting, the New Testament readings for the day are two unusual Christmas passages—without a shepherd, wise man, or manger in sight! That is because, rather than telling a story *about* Christ's birth, John and Hebrews consider the *meaning* of his birth: the mystery of Christ's incarnation.

While both Matthew and Luke begin their gospels by setting Jesus' life and ministry in history, John's gospel opens in eternity: *En arche he logos*—"In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1). Any reader of Scripture will think immediately of the very first chapter of Scripture, where God speaks the universe into being, creating by means of God's word: "Then God *said*, 'Let there be light;' and there was light" (Gen 1:3; cf. 1:6, 9,11,14, 20, 24). But for John's Greek-speaking audience, there would have been another resonance to this language. *Logos* of course means "word," but Greek Stoic philosophers also used *logos* as their name for the ordering principle behind all reality.

Astonishingly, John 1:14 asserts "And the Word became flesh and lived among us." In Greek, "flesh" is *sarx*: a satisfactorily ugly word for the stuff of which people are made. The *logos*, God's creative Word, the very structure of the universe, has become *sarx*. That is, quite literally, what "incarnation" means. To understand the Latin root of the word, you don't need to know Latin—you just need to be a fan of Mexican food. "Chili con carne" is, of course, chili with *meat*. The in*carnation* is the "in-meat-ment" of the Divine!

What a bizarre thing to say! In fact, we Christians are the only ones who make such a claim about God. Muslims and Jews find it inconceivable, if not offensive, to imagine the unimaginable God in such a way—eternity somehow collapsed into time, omnipresence folded into such a small and scandalously *specific* place as a baby, in a manger, in

Bethlehem. And they are right—it is offensive, inconceivable, a paradox, a mystery—but it is also the claim at the center of our Christian faith. We certainly have much to learn in interfaith dialogue, friends, but we have something to teach as well. The incarnation is what we bring to the table. God has shown us a human face, has spoken to us with a human voice, has touched us with human hands. In the person of Jesus, God has come to us as one of us.

For the author of Hebrews, this makes Jesus the perfect bridge of communication between God and people. He is a better messenger by far than the angels—even though the Greek *angelos* from which our word "angel" derives (like the Hebrew mal'ak, used for angels in the Old Testament) actually *means* "messenger." After all, the angels are spirits of wind and flame (Heb 1:7). No wonder, whenever angels appear to anyone in Scripture, the first thing they need to say is, "Do not be afraid"— angels are *spooky*! But Jesus—Jesus is one of us. Later in this book, the writer of Hebrews will affirm that Jesus is able "to sympathize with our weaknesses," because he "in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15). Jesus is one of us—yet at the same time, he is also both heir to and creator of all reality (Heb 1:2). Indeed, Jesus is "the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being" (Heb 1:3). That is, when we look at Jesus, we see God. Everything that God *is* is present in Jesus.

How do we wrap our heads around this claim? Here is an image that may help you—I know it helps me. Early in our marriage, Wendy used her money from selling Avon to buy our first computer—a clunky piece of machinery the size of a small suitcase called the Kaypro 2. That computer changed the way that I work. Suddenly, using word processing software, I could write the way that I think—not in straight lines, but in loops and circles and spirals—and then, straighten it out later.

When I first started using word processing software on our Kaypro 2, what you saw onscreen was not what you would see on paper once the document was printed. Every keystroke appeared in the onscreen text, including commands for underlining, indenting, and a host of other functions. Eventually, the software improved enough to show on the screen something more like the appearance of the printed document. But you could still input a command to reveal those hidden indicators

that determined the format of the final text—as you can still today. The command is, "Show invisibles."

Friends, Jesus is the "show invisibles" command for the cosmos. In Jesus, the *logos*, the hidden structure of all reality, is revealed, and what we see when we look at him is love. Self-giving, sacrificial love is the ordering principle of the universe. But more, Jesus is "the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being." God's own nature and character are revealed in the life and work of Jesus, who shows us that "God is love" (1 John 4:8).

The incarnation "shows invisibles" in other ways as well, revealing much that we may prefer *remain* hidden. For God chooses to reveal Godself, not in strength, but in the weakness of a baby; not in the halls of power and privilege, but in the desperate poverty of borrowed lodgings, in the hay and stink of a stable, with a feed trough for a cradle. God has chosen to reveal Godself among the poor and the outcast—and if we want to know God, we must seek God there.

Recently, someone shared with me on Facebook a cartoon showing a young man on his knees, asking "Why is it that whenever I ask Jesus to come into my life he always brings his friends?" Sure enough, in the background stands Jesus, surrounded by people we may prefer not to see: people of every hue and gender and level of ability, people whole and broken, people weak and strong. We cannot know and love God in Christ without knowing, and loving his friends, *all* of whom are his, all of whom *belong*.

Christmas is about the revelation of hidden things, the exaltation of lowly things. It is about the unexpected, unimaginable gift of God's presence in the least likely place, among the least likely people. May God reawaken us to the wonder and miracle of this day, of the "Word made flesh" among us today and every day.

PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

POEMS

AUTUMN 2018 · VOLUME 9

Frozen Pizza

Jill Croushore

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ABSTRACT

Frozen Pizza highlights the tension between cultural influence and faithfulness in worship. I intentionally wrote the poem in common meter, a poetic pattern with stanzas of four lines alternating between eight and six syllables. This popular meter allows people of all ages to sing *Frozen Pizza* to well-known hymn tunes such as *Amazing Grace*, *Azmon* (O, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing), and *St. Anne* (O God, Our Help in Ages Past) in order to mirror the pastoral challenge named within – our love of the familiar.

Almost walked past a dear old friend
Inside the groc'ry store.
A tired face, a coat and cap
And years of wear he wore.

My dear old friend where have you been
Since last our paths have crossed?
A story told of death come near,
A life so nearly lost.

Then on he went to tell me of
His days of last employ.
A smoky club within the 'hood
That housed him as a boy.

I cooked the finest dishes with
The best ingredients.
But all they did was whine, complain,
And cause my heart torment.

No longer could I nightly stand
The battle cry that meets ya'.
All they cried, Lord, all they cried was:
We want frozen pizza!

I sympathize with your past plight,
The problem that you name.
My dear old friend, I gleamed and grinned,
The Church is just the same.

God wants to give us healthy food
And things that make us grow.
But all we want are happy words,
Familiar hymns we know.

We can't await the Present wrapped
Beneath the Christmas tree.
We want to tear the paper off
Before the Babe we see.

God gives us time to contemplate
Redemption by His Son.
Slowly to unwrap the myst'ry
Of incarnation.

The trees of Christmas become trash;
Twelve days have just begun.
Ne'er pray we for a hastened
Second coming of the Son.

But now my friend I must move on
As quick approaches Lent.
Christmas hymns. Society wins.
And now we must repent.

PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

BOOK REVIEW

AUTUMN 2018 · VOLUME 9

Book Review

The Going: A Meditation on Jewish Law by Leon Wiener Dow.

Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan Press, 2017.
ISBN: 978-3-319-68830-5. xiii + 106 pages. 51.99 euro.

Jerome Creach

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Jerome F. D. Creach is the Robert C. Holland Professor of Old Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

REVIEW

Leon Wiener Dow is a research fellow and a member of the faculty at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem. He earned a PhD in Philosophy at Bar-Ilan University and received private rabbinic ordination from Rabbi Professor David Hartman. These professional credentials, and Dow's spiritually formative experiences that surround them, form the backbone of *The Going*. In this book Dow shares his spiritual journey, from his years growing up in Houston, Texas and his conviction as an adolescent that he should move to Israel, to his experiences with and study of Torah. He reflects on this journey in four chapters (chapter 1: Beginnings; chapter 2: Sayings, Writings, Doing; chapter 3: Shared Spacetime: Community; chapter 4: The Ineffable) and an Epilogue that briefly recounts each chapter and its purpose. Each chapter begins with an abstract that previews what Dow will discuss and a list of key words (and scholars) he uses in that discussion. The primary

lesson he offers from his life and study is that people of faith embody *halakha* ("the way to go") in communal practices of worship, sharing, and support (p. 2).

The Going is at once deeply personal and uniquely philosophical. On the personal side, the book includes Dow's reflections on his earliest experiences with Jewish thought and practice. For example, he shares how as a teenager his commitment to Sabbath observance led him to eschew attending high school football games. He also remembers a time after marrying his wife that he worked out his understanding of gender equality, which he calls "egalitarian halakha" (p. 15). Such reflection permeates the book. It concentrates, however, on Dow's place within and interaction with mostly Conservative Jewish communities, from Houston to New York to Israel.

Dow peppers the book with philosophical references, though he does not do so systematically. He indicates he depends on Jewish thinkers such as Martin Buber and especially Franz Rosenzweig. Informed readers will recognize that Dow draws from Rosenzweig to articulate his ideas of communal praxis as the true expression of halakha though he does not offer any sustained discussion of a single issue or set of issues related to Rosenzweig's thought.

The Going is an interesting book that may provoke thought and reflection on the spiritual life as it plays out in communities of faith. It will do so mostly, however, for patient and persistent readers. Dow does not specify the audience for his book, but he seems to write for consummate insiders, those intimately associated with Conservative and Orthodox Jewish communities and practices and contemporary reflection on them. For example, he frequently refers to halakha, but he does not define it. He says only that it is "the Jewish being-on-the-way" (p. 2). Readers outside the Jewish community (and many within it) would benefit from at least a simple explanation (e.g. that halakha refers to practice, compared to haggada which refers to telling/speaking of Torah). Nevertheless, one cannot help but be impressed with Dow's genuine piety and religious commitment. It is also obvious that he is immersed in some strands of contemporary Jewish philosophy. The world certainly needs the kind of testimony Dow gives to commitment to God as it takes shape within a community.

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ISSN 1949-9079