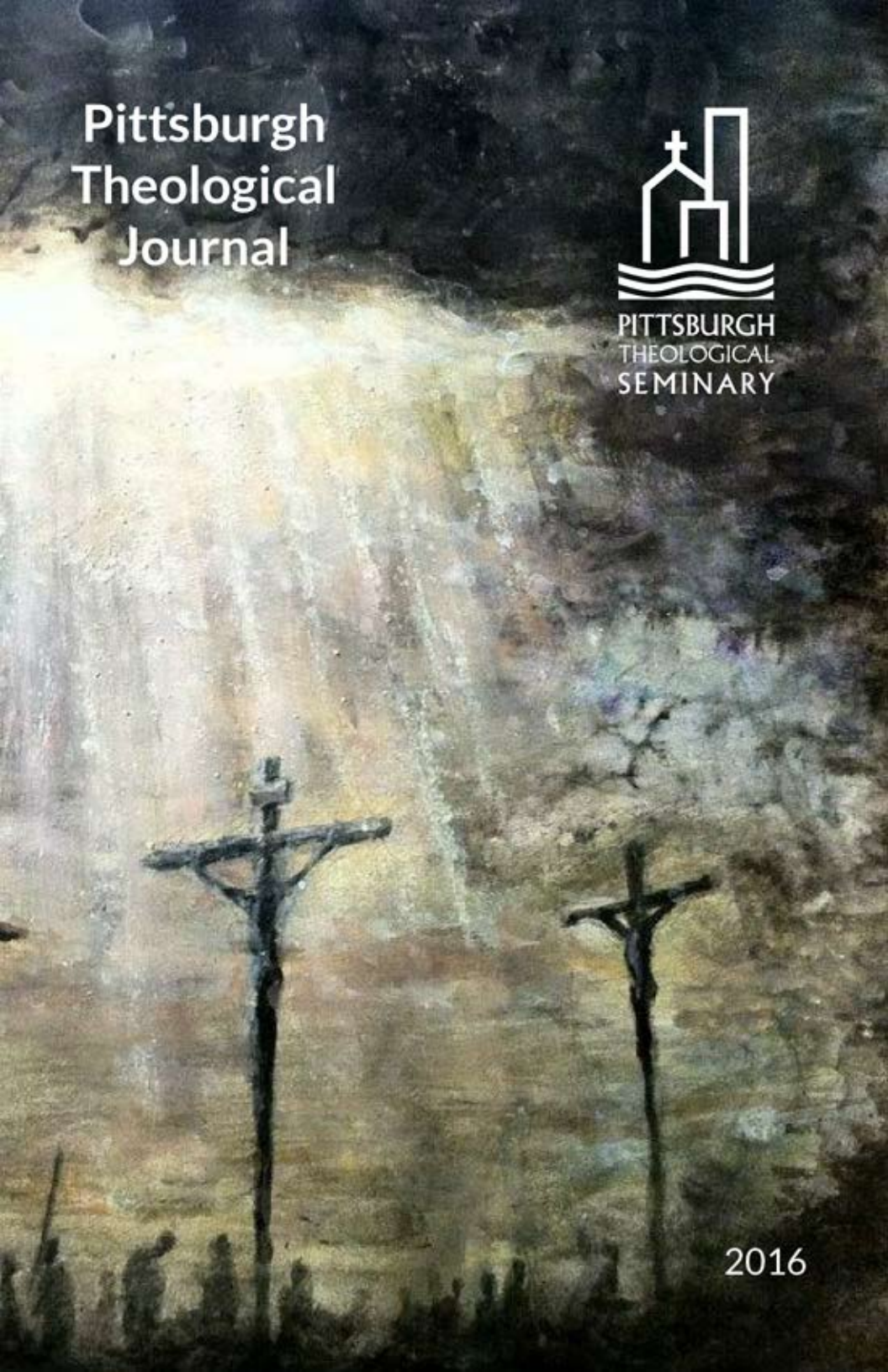
Pittsburgh Theological Journal



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2016

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Yohan Chung

Yohan Chung is a Th.M. student at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

Title: The day He washed my sins away
Acrylic paint, watercolors, oil-crayon, salt

This painting shows the night Jesus was crucified to wash our sins away. The dark and light sides have metaphorical meanings because Jesus conquered death (dark) and brought His Divine Light into the World.

The crowds around the cross are the reminder that all sinners bear the responsibility of His death. But just like He forgave the thief on the cross, and He forgave Peter for denying Him. He also will forgive us. The cross is our responsibility but it is also our freedom.

Letter from the Editor

May 2016

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 2016 publication of the Pittsburgh Theological Journal! Our annual publication seeks "to contribute to the development of pastor-theologians by promoting theological reflection, intellectual integrity, and practical wisdom." We have pursued this end in the 2016 journal by collecting, editing, and publishing the works of the students of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. In the pages that follow, you will see the fruits of the labor of all involved in the printing of this work!

The 2016 edition consists of two sermons, two poems, six research papers, and three reflection projects.

This year has been an exciting one for the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary community. We have welcomed some new leadership to the community. Our new president, David Esterline, has been a wonderful voice on campus and beyond. We also celebrate our own Heather Vacek to the new position as dean of the faculty. This is a time of change and transition for Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, and it is an exciting time to be a part of the community!

As Editor-in-Chief, I am deeply grateful to all who submitted work for potential publication in the journal. Space constrains prevent us from accepting all submissions, but we are so grateful for the submission of such a large variety of works from all those who are part of the seminary community. I am most grateful to my editorial staff. Darryl Lockie, Felix Rivera-Merced, Jon Chillinsky, and Brian Lays hold my unending gratitude. They have been a blessing to me and a joy to work with. Their dedication and excellence has made this work a true success.

It is my utmost hope that you find some meaning, excitement, reflection, and wisdom in the pages that follow.

In the service of Christ,

Danielle Estelle Ramsay

Editor-in-Chief

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A Theology of Environmental Justice

Alina Kanaski

Alina Kanaski is a senior M.Div. student at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. She hopes to enter small church ministry after graduation.

Introduction

Environmental problems are widely acknowledged to be a huge challenge of the 21st century: decreasing biodiversity, global warming, overharvesting, deforestation, and pollution are just some of the issues.[1] Yet American Christians are less likely to believe that global warming is happening than are Americans as a whole.[2] They are also less environmental in general, and less willing to sacrifice for environmental goals, than are average Americans.[3] Many American churches are failing to discuss environmental issues with their members, let alone urge them on to greater action on this issue. In my home church, a large mainline Protestant church, I have never heard issues of environmentalism or environmental justice discussed. Churches are a powerful part of the life of a Christian. They ideally shape and support Christians in their walk of faith, both encouraging them and keeping them accountable.[4] In the midst of the ongoing environmental issues, the church itself is an environment, one that shapes church-goers. Therefore, this paper will, therefore, examine the theological basis for churches' and Christians' involvement in environmental issues. It will then look at ways to improve the church environment to be more friendly to environmental concerns and environmental justice actions.

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1 Anup Shah, "Environmental Issues," *Global Issues*, updated 2 Feb. 2015, accessed 12 Nov. 2015, http://www.globalissues.org/issue/168/environmental-issues, http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-worldwide-environmental-crisis/12268; (both accessed 11/12/15); Lester Brown, *World on Edge: How to Prevent Environmental and Economic Collapse* (New York: Norton, 2011), 5-6. This list of issues intentionally ignores the human element of these crises, as popular media tends to. See the discussion in the next section for further analysis.

2 *Climate Change in the American Christian Mind* (George Mason University Center for Climate Change Communication, 2015), http://environment.yale.edu/climate-communication/files/Global-Warming-Religion-March-2015.pdf, accessed 11/12/15. The exception, at least in this study, was Catholics, who were more likely to believe in global warming than were Americans in general.

3 John M. Clements, Aaron M. McCright, et al., "Green Christians? An Empirical Examination of Environmental Concern Within the U.S. General Public," *Organization & Environment* XX (X), 10.

4 R. Peters, *Urban Ministry: An Introduction* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 163-164.

Before I begin, however, it is important to outline a theology of the church. It is a community of believers - a community oriented towards the future promised by God but also one that does well in their surroundings.[5] The church is called to be a people set apart - a people pointing people toward God's good vision for the future by acting upon that future now.[6] Paul's metaphor of the church as the body of Christ is most appropriate and helpful here (1 Cor 12:12-26). The body has many parts, all of which are unique yet unified in Christ through the Spirit.[7] The metaphor is a reminder of both our unity in Christ and our interconnectedness. Pain and joy are both shared throughout the body, whether modern-day Christians realize it or not.[8]

Church is where Christians go to have their spirits renewed, to see God present in the presence of their brothers and sisters in Christ. Church is where Christians go to serve God and serve others. Church is where Christians go to receive a vision of what God's future will be, and begin to participate in that vision themselves. Yet the church is failing its members. The current environmental crisis has widely been identified as a spiritual crisis far more than it is a crisis of over-consumption, wastefulness, or negligence, for society worships growth and consumption at the expense of the earth and of fellow humans.[9] It is a crisis intertwined with the closely related worship of technology, that is, worship of the human ability to craft tools and manipulate their environment.[10] It is a crisis of failing to love. The church is not addressing this false worship and is often encouraging it.

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5 Ibid., 170; J. Collins, "Church," in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 1: A-C, ed. Katherine Doob Sakenfeld (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006), 643-645; Alvin Pitcher, *Listen to the Crying of the Earth: Cultivating Creation Communities* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1993), 96; Mallory McDuff, *Natural Saints: How People of Faith Are Working to Save God's Earth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 182.

6 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Gemeinsames Leben: Wie Christen miteinander leben können* (Giessen: Brunnen Verlag, 1977), 16-17; Peters, *Urban Ministry*, 170.

7 William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther, *1 Corinthians* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 285-287.

8 Ibid., 287; Ben Lowe, *Green Revolution: Coming Together to Care for Creation* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2009), 18: Pitcher, *Listen to the Crying*, 71; Christena Cleveland, *Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the Hidden Forces that Keep us Apart* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2013), 35-40.

9 Sean McDonagh, *The Greening of the Church* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1990), 136; Michael S. Northcott, *A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming.* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2007); Lowe, *Green Revolution*, 26.

10 Martin Luther King, Jr., "The World House (Chapter 6)," in *A Testament to Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. James Melvin Washington (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), 620; Bergmann 105-107.

A Theology of Environmental Justice

If the church wants to change people's understanding of environmental justice – if I, as a future pastor, want to change how my parishioners understand environmental justice and their calling to it as Christians – then the church needs a deep understanding of environmental justice.

The Christian understanding of the environment often focuses on the idea of stewardship.[11] The Bible is clear that God created the earth (Gen 1-3, Is 40:12-31) and belongs to God (Lev 25:23, Ps 24:1). Furthermore, God created all of creation, not just humans, as good (Gen 1:4, 10, etc.), and God cares for all of creation (Gen 9:8-10, John 3:16, Rom 8:19-24). As God's unique and good work, creation needs to be cared for and protected.[12] The current environmental crisis shows how very much we have failed at that task, and that knowledge should spur us to do better.[13] Yet such an argument often fails to acknowledge the justice aspect of the environmental crisis. It is undeniable that God in the Bible speaks far more often of justice in human relationships than of justice towards creation.[14] An argument for environmental responsibility based only on the stewardship model, I would argue, allows people to escape responsibility (or even awareness) for the human injustice being done by our disregard for the environment. The argument for environmental responsibility becomes an argument based only on simple math – *human = steward* – that does not take human suffering into account. Stewardship can be an important part of environmental justice theology, but not on its own.

Justice is an incredibly important aspect of Scripture. Again and again, God affirms that justice is a central concern (Ex 23, Ps 82:1-4, Matt 23:23) and that humans should act justly to one another (Ps 72:2-4, Mic 6:8, Matt 25:31-46). Although often used in a legal sense, biblically the word has a much wider meaning: to live justly was to

11 Every practical book I read started with an understanding of environmental stewardship, and may or may not have continued to also address the justice issues of the current environmental crisis. Because of its prevalence, I choose to address it here.
12 Thomas Samuel, "Our Response to Ecological Crisis," in *A Christian Response to Global Climate*, ed. Thomas Samuel and Mathew Koshy Punnakadu, (Tiruvalla: Christaba Sahitya Samithi, 2009), 11; Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si' of the Holy Father Francis on Care for our Common Home* (Rome: The Vatican, 2015), 87; McDuff, *Natural Saints*, 182; Lowe, *Green Revolution*, 41-42; McDonagh, *Greening*, 127-128.
13 Charlene Hosenfeld, *Ecofaith: Creating and Sustaining Green Congregations* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2009), 1 ; Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, 6-7, 13.
14 McDonagh, *Greening*, 130.

live in right relationship, to live in peace (*shalom*) with others and with God.[15] A situation of justice is, therefore, one where there are equality and peace between all people, even all creation.[16] Such justice, such right relationships, include not only social interactions but also a guarantee of enough to live well for all people.[17] Such justice comes only from God.[18] God calls all humans to do and live such justice, far more than God calls all humans to live in piety (Am 5:21-24, Mic 6:8).[19]

The current model of society and economics create incredible injustice. The entire wealth and comfort of the rich West come from taking resources from former colonies while underpaying or enslaving those performing the labor.[20] The entire wealth and comfort of the wealthy in the West come from underpaying a majority of the population.[21] It is sometimes easy to overlook how our environmental choices are also unjust. Global warming overwhelmingly affects the poor–those who have least contributed to the problem–with disease, starvation, and refugee status.[22] The rich export their waste, either to other countries or less wealthy neighborhoods in their own country.[23] Environmental degradation caused by our ravenous consumption leads to starvation, disease, and poverty among those who were already poor

15 Julie Clawson, *Everyday Justice: The Global Impact of our Daily Choices* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2009), 20-25; Friedrich Büchsel, "κρίνω," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol III Θ-K, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), 923-926; Lowe, *Green Revolution*, 28.

16 Temba L. J. Mafico, "Just, Justice," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary: Vol. 3 H-J*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1128; Werner Foerster, "εἰρήνη," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol II Δ-H, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), 412-415; Clawson, *Everyday Justice*, 20-25.

17 Mafico, "Justice," 1128; Clawson, *Everyday Justice*, 24; Büchsel, "κρίνω," 942.

18 Philip J. Nel, "*shlm*," in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, Vol. 4, ed. Willem A. VanGemeeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 132; Foerster, "εἰρήνη," 413; Büchsel, "κρίνω," 924.

19 James Luther Mays, *Amos* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), 3, 10-12; Mafico, "Justice," 1128.

20 McDonagh, *Greening*, 133; Pitcher, *Listen to the Crying*, 47-49; Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, 5-7; Clawson, *Everyday Justice*, 54-60; King, "World House," 622-629.

21 Clawson, *Everyday Justice*, 99-109.

22 L. Kristen Page, L. Kristen, "Global Climate: Implications for Global Health," in *Christians, the Care of Creation, and Global Climate Change*, ed. Lindy Scott (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2008), 33-34; Carol S. Robb, *Wind, Sun, Soil, Spirit: Biblical Ethics and Climate Change* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 8-9; J. Andrew Hoerner and Nia Robinson, *A Climate of Change: African Americans, Global Warming, and A Just Climate Policy in the U.S.* (Oakland: Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative, 2008), 1-2; Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, 18-19, 29.

23 Robert D. Bullard, *The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2005), for instance 43-61, 87-106; Clawson, *Everyday Justice*, 146-151; Peters, *Urban Ministry*, 165-166.

and vulnerable.[24] Environmental problems are intricately connected to injustice.

Poverty and environmental issues are not separable; they are intertwined, just as all issues in our globally-connected world and just as all people are connected as image-bearers of God.[25] As Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote so eloquently, "all life is interrelated. The agony of the poor impoverishes the rich; the betterment of the poor enriches the rich. We are inevitably our brother's keeper because we are our brother's brother. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly."[26] As the body of Christ, what affects our sisters and brothers also affects us. Moreover, as people who live on and from the earth, environmental degradation always has justice and human aspects. We just need to look to see them.

What is needed, then, is a theology of environmental justice. Such a theology upholds the right of all people, who are created in the image of God, to a healthy environment, healthy living situation, and enough resources to live well.[27] Such a theology also seeks justice for the environment, which was created good in the sight of God.[28] It sees that environment and justice are closely intertwined. It acknowledges that we need to change, but that our systems also need to change. Current economic and governmental systems make lasting change extremely difficult, if not impossible, without changing the system.[29]

We live in a society where the environment and people are both seen as objects, as things that can be used as the rich see fit and then discarded. This is especially true of people of color. As objects, no thought is given to their needs or desires.[30] All people and all nature need to be drawn into our conception of the body of Christ, for they

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24 James Stephen Mastaler, "A Case Study on Climate Change and its Effects on the Global Poor," *Worldviews* 15 (2011), 76; Bullard, *The Quest*, 4; Brown, *World on Edge*, 10-15; Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, 33-35.

25 Martlin Luther King, Jr., "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution," in *A Testament to Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. James Melvin Washington (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990), 269-270; King, "World House," 617; Pitcher, *Listen to the Crying*, 71; Lowe, *Green Revolution*, 18.

26 King "World House," 626.

27 Bullard, *The Quest*, 4-7; Bettie Ann Brigham, "Words for a World of Want," in Lowe, *Green Revolution*, 111.

28 McDonagh, *Greening*, 109; Hosenfeld, *Ecofaith*, 1; Mastaler, "A Case Study," 76.

29 Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, 273: Robb, *Wind*, 5; Hoerner and Robinson, *Climate of Change*, 1; McDuff, *Natural Saints*, 177; Master 83.

30 R. Peters, "A Theology of Sustainable Environmental Justice," Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 28 Sept. 2015.

are all part of that body.[31] Perhaps the deepest change that must occur is for humans to begin again to see their identity as part of the land, as tied to a place.[32] By building right relationships and by creating justice, the church can witness to this huge pain and sin that exists. As children of God, we who make up the church can do no other.

Changing Churches

The place for change on environmental issues to happen is the church. As a problem caused by spiritual lacks (whether of empathy, justice, or awareness – and idols – racism, comfort, and consumption) it is a problem the church should and must address.[33] Moreover, the church is a place that not only shapes Christians but a place where Christians willingly come to be shaped and educated.[34] It is a unique place.

Change, however, is difficult for congregations to handle. Change has been shown to create anxiety and conflict in congregations, especially if it is rushed, forced, or if a deep and significant change is needed.[35] The church cannot be allowed to escape the truth, but change must occur slowly over time if it is to be a lasting change.[36] The following therefore outlines methods of creating change in a congregation, focusing specifically on environmental issues.

The first thing to realize is that environmental issues are difficult for people to face. Addressing these issues often involves crossing political, socio-economic, or racial lines in order to see the truth about what is happening, and that is difficult and uncomfortable to do.[37] Despite overwhelming scientific evidence, many Christians refuse to acknowledge environmental problems or their responsibility to act on

31 Psalm 148; Cleveland, *Disunity*, 49-50.
32 Willie Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 40-43; Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, 15-16; McDonagh, *Greening*, 157.
33 Lowe, *Green Revolution*, 26; McDonagh, *Greening*, 136.
34 Lowe, *Green Revolution*, 86-87; Pitcher, *Listen to the Crying*, 96; Mastaler, "A Case Study," 84; Francis, *Laudato Si*, 156-157.
35 David Brubaker, *Promise and Peril: Understanding and Managing Change and Conflict in Congregations* (Lanham: The Alban Institute, 2009), 89-103; Peter L. Steinke, *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times: Being Calm and Courageous No Matter What* (Lanham: The Alban Institute, 2006), 121-134.
36 Brubaker, *Promise and Peril*, 92; Steinke, *Congregational Leadership*, 130-134.
37 Cleveland, *Disunity*, 88.

those problems.[38] The issue here is not always facts; in fact, trying to inform these convinced anti-environmentalists of the issues tends to lead to them becoming even more convinced that they are right, for conflict causes people to narrow their focus and think less as their fight-or-flight instincts take over.[39] It is painful to be told that one is wrong, let alone that one is responsible for such suffering and pain. When that has happened, one's first instinct is to lash out.[40] That does not excuse anyone from speaking about the issues (Ezek 33:1-9). It is merely a word of warning, a caution to be intelligent about how the issues are raised.

Part of the discomfort people feel when addressing environmental issues is the size of the issue; it is not something that will be solved by one person. In fact, we live in a system that thrives off of environmental destruction and injustice.[41] But the church is the place to celebrate Christ's victory over the powers of the world, including oppression and injustice. The church is the place to celebrate hope, and to act as if that hope has already come.[42]

The first step is for people to come to a place of repentance of their sinful participation in racist, environmentally destructive systems.[43] As mentioned above, this is unlikely to come about simply from a recitation of facts. Rather, people need to truly and deeply *understand* the interconnectedness of human life and the body of Christ. They need to be able to put a face to those who are suffering, and realize that they are not *other*, but part of the group of humanity that they have a Christian responsibility to help.[44] The best way to do this is in face-

38 See, for instance, "Protect the Poor: Ten Reasons to Oppose Harmful Climate Change Policies." *The Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation*, 17 Sept., 2014, accessed 26 May, 2015, http://www.cornwallalliance.org/2014/09/17/protect-the-poor-ten-reasons-to-oppose-harmful-climate-change-policies/; Thomas Gale Moore, *Climate of Fear: Why We Shouldn't Worry About Global Warming*, accessed 21 May, 2015. http://web.stanford.edu/~moore/Climate_of_Fear.pdf. Such denials tend to be incredibly racist and unaware of the true nature of structural inequality; Moore, for instance, seems to find it ridiculous that rich countries should actually be expected to help poor countries.

39 Joel Achenbach, "Why do many Reasonable People Doubt Science?" *National Geographic*, March 2015, accessed May 31, 2015, http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2015/03/science-doubters/achenbach-text; Steinke, *Congregational Leadership*, 106-107; Hicks, *Dignity*, 10-14.

40 Hicks, *Dignity*, 95-98; Steinke, *Congregational Leadership*, 106-107.

41 Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, 273; Robb, *Wind*, 5; Hoerner and Robinson, *Climate of Change*, 1; McDuff, *Natural Saints*, 177; Master 83.

42 McDonagh, *Greening*, 146; Pitcher, *Listen to the Crying*, 96.

43 Lowe, *Green Revolution*, 44-45; Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, 42; Samuel, "Ecological Crisis," 9.

44 Humans are group creatures, and are much more willing to help those who are part of their group. Cleveland, *Disunity*, 97-98; Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, 42; Mastaler, "A Case Study," 76.

to-face interactions with another group, allowing both groups to see the unique humanity of the other. Practical ways of doing so include a fellowship event (one that intentionally mingles and stretches both parties into knowing the other) or a shared (*shared* being the key word here) service project.[45] Alvin Pitcher suggests pairing with another church as sister churches.[46] It is vital that both parties feel included, heard, and equal.[47] Whatever the church decides to focus on is wonderful. It is important for a church to focus on a specific issue, or a related set of issues, rather than trying to address everything.[48] It is also important for the church to decide on an issue about which it feels passionate. Environmental justice is hard work, and an issue handed down from the pastor or other leaders will not be addressed well or for very long.[49]

Such change and repentance can only come about through transformation, not just of the individuals in a church but also of the church community itself. The hope is that that transformation will then spread to the community in which the church is situated.[50] The church must strive to change both itself and the world.[51] People see how the church and its members live and take that into consideration when they consider how seriously to take the church.[52] Peter L. Steinke distinguishes between technical and adaptive problems: technical problems are those that can be fixed with a simple solution, such as a new computer. Adaptive problems, however, require larger, more creative solutions. They require true change.[53] Addressing adaptive problems such as the pressing environmental justice issues of the present require true change and transformation, not quick fixes. It cannot be treated as a technical problem.[54] Rather, it is a problem of recognizing and rooting out idols in our own lives.

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45 Cleveland, *Disunity*, 152-176; Lowe, *Green Revolution*, 113-118.
46 Pitcher, *Listen to the Crying*, 100-102.
47 Donna Hicks, *Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); Cleveland, *Disunity*, 158; Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, 42.
48 Pitcher, *Listen to the Crying*, 96-97.
49 Ibid., 100; McDuff, *Natural Saints*, 192; Brubaker, *Promise and Peril*, 92.
50 Fred Brown, "Environmental Justice in the City," Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 16 Nov. 2015; McDuff, *Natural Saints*, 182; Peters, *Urban Ministry,* 146-150; Mastaler, "A Case Study," 84.
51 Mastaler, "A Case Study," 76-77.
52 Lowe, *Green Revolution*, 40.
53 Steinke, *Congregational Leadership*, 126-130.
54 Peters, *Urban Ministry,* 145-148; Francis, *Laudato Si*, 157-162.

Yet transformation starts small. It must, to have any lasting effect, for transformation that attempts to start huge will only fizzle out.[55] Examples of small changes that can begin the transformation include beginning to recycle, eliminating disposable dishes and silverware, or performing an energy audit. More examples include pairing with a local environmental justice organization to have a service day, encouraging every church member to call a representative to campaign for or against a current bill, or having a prayer meeting about environmental justice issues.[56] These are two distinctly different but important kinds of actions. Churches can and must begin to use their resources more wisely, to better reflect the need to care for God's earth, but such witness is useless if it does not occur in a church that is also in a relationship with its local community, addressing the effects of environmental injustice around them. On the other hand, churches attempting to change others without changing themselves (Matt 7:1-5) are also giving useless witness.

The literature does not address this need for local connection enough. I read many books about how churches can become more "green," with tips on creating recycling programs and printing fewer bulletins. Some of them tied the environmental crisis to justice problems around the world, but none of them touched on the environmental justice problems occurring here, in America, in their own neighborhoods.[57] It is infinitely easier to see problems far away and propose solutions, especially when they are populations that we have been taught to think of as uneducated, helpless, and only able to better themselves with our help (i.e. non-white populations).[58] The racism in America is quite clear. Again, I would argue that connection, true connection, with the surrounding neighborhoods and problems is the only way to combat this attitude in the church. Seeing others for who they are, with all their struggles and joys, is the only way to help people begin to see the institutes of racism and environmental degradation that are all around us and to which we are all contributing.[59] The ultimate goal is to transform a church community, to help them live in communities that are respecting their fellow sisters and brothers by respecting the earth.

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55 Lowe, *Green Revolution*, 118; McDuff, *Natural Saints*, 188.
56 McDuff, *Natural Saints*, 182-188; Hosenfeld, *Ecofaith*, 187.
57 To be fair, this is a wider trend in climate change literature in general. Of course, that does not mean that it is not still a problem, and ideally Christian authors would be able to break out of that system of ignoring non-white, at-home suffering, but it is also not a uniquely Christian problem.
58 King "World House," 624-626.
59 See, for instance, Hoerner and Robinson, *Climate of Change*; Bullard, *The Quest*.

Conclusion

The environmental justice problems we face can be overwhelming. It is difficult to imagine how one person or one church can make a difference. We are not, however, called to make a difference; we are called to follow God wherever we are sent. The prophet Jeremiah, who kept doing what God told him to do even when it had little to no effect, comes to mind. We are called to faithfulness, not effectiveness. We are called to faith in God, not faith in our own power to make a difference. God is the source of our hope, not our own ability to change things.[60]

Again, each church is different. One church may feel passionate about water usage, another about pollution, and a third about global warming. Each of these different concerns (and many others!) is needed and valid. The body of Christ is not made up only of eyes (1 Cor 12:14-26)! It is useless for any one church to try to emulate another, and I would encourage grace as churches discover their unique calling to environmental justice. We are called to live well, in a way that respects the earth and our fellow humans. That call must be lived out, not just in individuals' lives, but also in the life of the church.

60 Lowe, *Green Revolution*, 113, 170-180; Samuel, "Ecological Crisis," 11; Northcott, *A Moral Climate*, 273; Francis, *Laudato Si*, 166-168.

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Her Body Is

Rebecca Dix

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Introduction

The hectic noon-day traffic swarmed around me as I navigated my way to my destination. Safely nestled under my seat belt and two hands on the wheel, I constantly check my mirrors and glance around me to protect my car and others. The radio sings in the background as I absent-mindedly hum along with the tunes. Suddenly, the stream of melodies is broken by an advertisement. Through the speakers on my car, a female DJ advertises laser hair removal. She wants me to get it too, sharing how transformative her laser hair decision has been in her life. She said to her unknown audience that laser hair was the only way, "To get rid of the thick, black hair and keep it on my head where it's supposed to be."

Women's bodies are the focus of much social commentary. The focus is probably because they have been made to be so visible. Yet the bodies that have been made most visible are the very bodies that have been most silent. There is a plethora of body talk without women being allowed to talk about their own bodies, such as the hair removal radio advertisement which continues a narrative of what women's bodies should be. The pressure on women's bodies cannot but influence their perceptions on food. Food is an ordinary, mundane, and extremely human reality. For the average person, food makes a home three times a day, seven days a week, along with occasional guest appearances of snacks. Food fuels our bodies and food shapes our bodies. Literally, in that the intake of food regulates the body's function, and figuratively in that food plays commentary to our cultural identity. Since food shapes bodies for better and for worse, the pressure on women's bodies to be shaped cannot but influence the relationship between food and women.

Accordingly, a human's relationship with food directly influences our relationship with God. The narrative woven between food, womens' bodies, and God is a complex and sometimes allusive story

to grasp. Essential to understanding human relationship with God is God's Self as revealed and proclaimed in and through the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

God the Father is the Creator of all and in being the Creator rather than a part of the created order, God is the source of all life. Jesus the Son is fully God, being at the beginning with God "all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made."[1] The Holy Spirit sustains life, who was poured out on all flesh so that the Son and Father could be glorified and the world would thus be liberated in the fellowship with God.[2] While each person of the Trinity is distinct, no activity is done where all three are not present and unified in will.[3] The Trinity is in perfect unity, revealing a key aspect of relationality. God is relational in God's very nature and "through our union with Christ is to share in a relationship, the communion of love between the Father and the Son in the power of the Spirit."[4]

Building on the Trinitarian aspect of relationality is the aspect of openness and sending. In the Trinity's relational identity, life is because the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not closed to one another but are open and unified in will. The openness to one another is the origin and source of the Triune God's openness to all of the created order as it continually sends itself in love to be manifest to humankind and the world. The sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit allows humankind and the world to encounter a boundless God within the confines of human experience and becomes a part of our history.[5] Through the Triune God's relational identity humankind is grafted into and opened to that perfect union which calls all of humankind to "faith, new obedience and new fellowship."[6] The sacraments of baptism and communion celebrate, remember, and transform human orientation back towards being unified with God and being unified with others.

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1 John 1:3, RSV.
2 Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit,* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 60.
3 Bernard Lohse, *A Short History of Christian Doctrine,* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 68.
4 Andrew Purves and Charles Partee, *Encountering God,* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 32.
5 Moltmann, 56.
6 Ibid.

Yet, the narratives about food in relation to women's bodies work against the glorification of God through unification. By addressing the broken perceptions of food as a source of life for women's bodies (eating disorders) and women's bodies being sources of food (breastfeeding), I will shed light on the spiritual and theological consequences which disorders human relationships with God and human relationships with one another.

Food, Bodies, and God

Carroll Saussy writes food is "a constant and central need for human life."[7] Food is our constant companion, reminding us that no matter how self-sufficient and independent we may become our bodies are not self-sufficient. We still depend on food outside of ourselves. We depend on food to live.

The dependence on food for life creates a perfect platform for deeper comprehension of our dependence on God for life. Connections with food and the Divine is not a strange or new phenomenon in the Christian church. In the Eucharist, the pastor takes the bread in her hands, breaks it, ripping a seam through the layers of baked gluten strands. She takes the cup and pitcher, holds them for all to see as she pours out vibrant red grape based liquid, releasing its aroma that mingles with the space now made sacred. She says take and eat, take and drink. This bread and this cup has been given to you in remembrance that in God we receive our physical and spiritual nourishment. We are beckoned to remember the mundane and the divine are co-mingling, as evident in the physical nourishment we feel when eating and drinking.

The Lord's Supper is not the only place where the world of food and the world of belief collide. The language of hunger, nourishment, and satisfaction have been "indispensable to the rhetoric of spirituality within the Christian tradition."[8] So there is more going on with our food choices than we may realize.

Food reflects and shapes societies, as it did in the early Church and as it does now. This is especially true for women, for whom food is "a psychosocial issue deeply connected to identity, self-esteem,

7 Carroll Saussy, "Food, Glorious Food?" *In Her Own Time,* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 296.
8 Margaret Miles, *Bodies in Society,* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2008), 59.

intimacy, community and celebration."[9] If food impacts women, it impacts their bodies. If it affects their bodies it affects their spiritual well-being and their theological understanding of God. Bodies are the vessels that carry us through this life. In that burden, bodies carry our thoughts, beliefs, and feelings which affect our actions. It is with bodies that church does theology. "Churches often portray theology as a body of knowledge and doctrines and creeds to be ingested, rather than a process of meaning-making in which humans engage with each other and with God."[10] Bodies are an essential component to theology and food is theologically charged through humans' relationship to it.

If perceptions on food are altered, the perceptions of God are altered accordingly. For if food is a source of life and provides life giving qualities, then a human understanding of God the Creator of all, who is the true source of life, is affected. The nature of the Triune God remains but the perceptions of God's intrinsic nature from a human viewpoint can negatively shift based on experiences rooted in reality. Experiences of human life are embodied, carried out in bodies and leaving the fingerprints of experience upon bodies. Thus food, such the bread and the cup, are not the only storehouses of remembrance. Human bodies in and of themselves remember and are molded by mental, emotional and physical moments. Female bodies are no exception for being receptacles of memory. "Many female bodies store memories of old wounds. They bear testimony to the fact that cultural norms, which can become embedded in family systems, often have pernicious effects on female bodies across the spectrum of race, class, and ethnicity."[11] If the experiences and thus memories being storied in female bodies involve a distorted view of food, what then are the spiritual and theological repercussions for the church and women's understanding about who God is?

I will be taking a look at the relation between women and food and how it can be influenced. The first relation will be that of food as a source of life and nourishment for women and how that is disrupted by the demands placed upon females of all ages. The second is the relation between women's bodies as sources of nourishment. As will be unveiled, any distortion stimulates mistrust in women about food and eventually establishes a distortion in the relationship between women and God.

9 Carroll Saussy, 296.
10 Dori Baker, *Doing Girlfriend Theology: God Talk With Young Women,* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2005), 152.
11 Dori Baker, 157.

Disordered Eating: Body as Broken

To live in the United States is to live in a paradox. America's number of people dieting increases along with the grwoing number of diet books sold each year, while this country is also the world leader in food consumption and most obesity.[12] By the age of six years old, girls start to be concerned about their bodies. 40-60% of girls ages 6-12 begin to voice worries about their bodies and about becoming too fat.[13] As their bodies change in a way their eyes see as negative, food becomes the enemy, as the number one culprit of body expansion.

The three widely discussed eating disorders are anorexia nervosa, bulimia, and binge eating disorder. Anorexia nervosa is the disorder focused on achieving thinness through the abstaining of food.[14] Bulimia is characterized by binge-purge cycles, where persons consume a large amount of food only to purge it.[15] Binge eating disorder has only relatively recently been introduced as a diagnosable eating disorder. It is characterized by eating large amounts of food without purging, resulting in weight gain and obesity, although not all those with binge eating disorder become obese.[16]

The cause of eating disorders is complex, but persons who have experienced trauma in their lives are more likely to be prone to an eating disorder. The traumas include but are not limited to racism, sexual abuse, poverty, sexism, emotional abuse, heterosexism, class injuries, and acculturation.[17] However, that does not mean all persons who have an eating disorder have experienced trauma or that all persons who have trauma also have an eating disorder. This fact helps illustrate something essential to understand: that eating disorders are social problems rather than individual problems. Eating disorders are not born out of isolation but from a community and cultural context. The significance of the social component is not to diminish the responsibility of individuals for their eating habits. It does reframe the model of the individual being labeled as sick and christens the systems that encourage and perpetuate eating disorders as sick and broken.[18]

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12 Jane E. Dasher, "Manna in the Desert: Eating Disorders and Pastoral Care", *Through the Eyes of Women: Insights for Pastoral Care,* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996).
13 http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/get-facts-eating-disorders.
14 Jane Dasher, "Manna in the Desert: Eating Disorders and Pastoral Care", 182.
15 Jane Dasher, 183.
16 Ibid.
17 Dori Baker, 158.
18 Jane Dasher, 185.

The sick and broken system writes two main narratives for girls and women to absorb, encouraging disordered concepts of eating, body, and worth. The first narrative is a view that a woman's body is a vessel to feed sexual appetite. With the extreme exposure to women's bodies filled with a charged, sexual energy, women are told they must alter themselves in order to be as appealing as the models in the pictures.[19] Such a narrative distorts their self-perception, leading them down a path of cyclical thought in that no matter how much they have withheld from themselves they must do more. On the June 2013 cover of SHAPE magazine, laid out front and center is a very exposed Britney Spears.[20] She looks confident and unashamed of her body, and she shouldn't be ashamed. Her body is very beautiful. However, bookending her figure you see promises for a smaller, firmer, flatter you in order to finally have that body which is "built for sex." We see her particular body shape partnered with sexual appeal and desire. Our minds begin associating this body type as the body type to have in order to be unashamed of our skin. It is this body shape needed to be wanted and loved.

Typically applied to persons struggling with anorexia nervosa and bulimia, how the warped perception of women as sexual beings affects those with binge eating disorders is it perpetuates the cycle of binge eating. In perceiving a society which says to be worthy and wanted they need to look away, when they binge their bodies are moving away from the goal. According to society's narrative, larger girls and women are not appealing and especially not sexually. This movement away increases the worthlessness which then triggers them to binge eat again.

I feel I can write this with confidence because I was a woman who once was a girl who experienced these pressures to be true. Standing in line in the grocery aisle, idly gazing around, my eyes are caught by the bright and shiny packaging of magazines. Even my eyes as a heterosexual female are drawn to the bodies and shapes of the bravely exposed women and I feel parts of me longing to be them. I want to be wanted. I want to be brave and unashamed. I want a body like theirs. Even the magazine cover pictured above, as I observed it for writing this paper I found myself wanting to have her body and wanting to have someone admire my body as much as I was admiring hers.

19 Margaret Miles, 60.
20 http://www.shape.com/blogs/fit-famous/britney-does-it-again-june-issue-shape

Shelly Colette outlines how the female body is sculpted around a central notion of being solely and only a sensual and sexual being in her article "Eroticizing Eve." Focusing on how advertising has utilized and perpetuated the commentary on Eve and women's bodies, she points out that sin as sexual is embodied in the female form yet the female is never able to shake herself of the mantel. Eve (and all women by association) is "characterized as predominately sexual."[21] The embodiment of sin as sexual in female form traps women's self and identity to being in relation only with sexuality, with the added emphasis of sexuality as sin. Thus, the female body is both to live into its fully sexualized form and to be degraded because of it.

The second narrative is that eating disorders are attempts from persons who are otherwise powerless to have power over something – their own bodies.[22] In the medieval context the desire to exercise control had two parts. The first part was in the household economy, the women were in charge of the pantry and food.[23] Women were in charge of what the family consumed whether they made the food themselves or supervised a well-stocked staff. Having control over the family pantry meant they also were the ones who decided if food was given to those in need. The second part in which women had control through food was that women's bodies symbolized flesh, body, and matter in opposite of men's bodies which symbolized spirit, soul, and mind.[24] By women being able to devote themselves to extreme fasting and food deprivation in medieval times, they were able to subdue and control the perceived evil in their own flesh.

Many could point out the similarities between medieval women[25] and young women with the eating disorders of anorexia and bulimia. Medieval religious women and desert mothers would not eat for days. For a small portion of the women, the only intake of food was the Eucharist. Women who fasted for religious purposes were regarded

21 Shelley Collette, "Erotizing Eve" *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion,* (2015): 31.2, 15.
22 Margaret Miles, 60.
23 Nadia Lahutsky, "Food and Feminism and Historical Interpretations: The Case of Medieval Holy Women", *Setting the Table,* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1995), 239.
24 Nadia Lahutsky, 237.
25 The severity of the early female saints, martyrs, and desert mothers in their culinary regime could be analyzed under the scrutiny of whether their bodies were being molded and shaped by their patriarchal driven societies – and most likely has been discussed at length somewhere other than this paper. For a more in depth analysis of the history and influences on medieval women and their relationships to fasting, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feasts and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women,* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987).

as saints in their own societies, making their practices not merely self-destructive. Margaret Miles points out that,

> Like many medieval women, they [young girls with eating disorders] use their bodies harshly for the purposes of developing an interior life, a will and agency that is not encouraged or supported by secular society.

So where is the line between devotion and destruction? The choice of not eating is where the similarities begin and end between medieval women and women with eating disorders. The dissimilarities are the motives behind the choices, and for modern girls and women the pressures and motives that create a distortion between eating food and women's bodies are the desires to validate worth as sexual beings and to have control where otherwise they have none.

Breast feeding: Body as Mother

Dori Baker was sitting in a room, away from the main traffic of the gym she was working out in, quietly nursing her hungry infant. She was thankful to be able to go to a gym that had daycare facilities, although at this point her infant still needed mom to get nourishment. Later she was pulled aside by the manager and told that another patron complained so she would have to nurse her baby elsewhere. Filled with shame, she nodded and left, though upon later reflection she realized that not only did she have nothing to be ashamed of but there were state laws which protected her right to provide necessary sustenance to her baby. Seeking to broaden awareness and be a part of the culture shift around the bodies of breast feeding mothers, she wrote a letter to the editor which she reprinted in her book, *Doing Girlfriend Theology,* in her chapter about women's bodies. In her letter she states:

> Breast feeding is not a lifestyle choice. It is a significant medical choice for my baby. The American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines strongly endorse breast feeding during the first year of life as the best way to ensure a child's long term health. Despite the obvious health benefits of breast-feeding, an anonymous gym patron has found my simple act of mothering offensive. In an era when young women

> succumb to eating disorders, in part due to society's ideal of feminine beauty, opportunities to be offended abound: a woman's breast serving its biological function should not be one of them.[26]

Dori Baker's experience is not uncommon. On March 13th, 2015, CNN posted an article sharing the experience a mother had being hassled by a flight attendant for breastfeeding her 5 month old son. When she tried defending herself, another passenger said her breastfeeding was offensive, causing her to feel embarrassed and humiliated.[27] Breast feeding is a natural biological function for most women and is the best source of nutrition for the youngest and most vulnerable members of society. In fact, 49 of 50 states in the United States of America protect a mother's right to breastfeed in public, yet stories abound of women being asked to cover up.[28] So why is breastfeeding offensive? Has it always been that way?

Breastfeeding being visible to the public eye was not always a taboo. Though medieval women might not have been breastfeeding publicly, it was not hidden from society or the family. To them, it was common sense for mothers to breastfeed their infants or at the very least to provide a wet nurse so that the child could be nourished. Not only did women's bodies bring life into the world but they were necessary for women's body to keep the new life sustained. It is in breastfeeding's very nature of sustaining life that allowed for Mary, the mother of Christ, feeding the infant Jesus at her breast to be viewed as sacramental.[29] Many artists found the Virgin Mary breastfeeding as a source of artistic inspiration. One example is a painting done by Bartolomeo Veneto titled *Madonna Che Allatta Il Bambino*. Veneto depicts the Virgin Mary with her eyes locked on those on looking as she cradles the Christ child to her exposed breast, sustaining the life of the one who is the life and light of the world. How could breastfeeding not be beautiful when seen through this lens?

There have been recent strides taken in support of women having the right to publicly breastfeed. On January 11, 2015, during a service

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26 Dori Baker, 143.

27 Katia Hetter, "Breastfeeding Mom Says Flight Traveled in Unfriendly Skies", March 13th, 2015, http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/10/travel/feat-united-airlines-breastfeeding-incident/

28 Jessica Samakow, "These Are All The States Where It's Legal To Breastfeed In Public", August 1, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/01/map-where-its-legal-to-breastfeed-in-public_n_5637301.html

29 Nadia M. Lahutsky, 240.

led by Pope Francis at the Sistine Chapel, there were 33 babies present with their respective parents to be baptized. Pope Francis announced to the mothers present in the service to not be afraid or ashamed to breastfeed their infants in church during the service.[30] Recently, democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders thanked a mother whom photographers captured breastfeeding at the rally. She was thanked for doing what mothers should do best, which is taking care of their children whenever and wherever they need to be taken care of.[31]

Both of these instances give the impression of being encouragement for the mothers; yet I cannot help but also see the statements in approval of public breastfeeding as censure for those who would oppose the mother's actions. The people who are potentially disgusted by breastfeeding mother's exposed anatomy are reacting from the premise of women's bodies being only sexual objects. It is not in women's bodies being exposed in a sexual manner that disgusts people. If that were the case, the female anatomy would cease being a viable advertisement tool because of everyone complaining. No, it is in women's bodies not being sexual at all but as functional and natural in which they are being shamed. In breastfeeding, women are taking control of their bodies publicly in ways that upset the already established bodily status quo.

Interestingly, it appears that the same narratives of oppression and opposition at work in eating disorders are the same ones causing distortions in women's bodies being viewed as sources of nourishment. Women's bodies as consumable only as sex objects interferes with their potential as anything non-sexual, such as motherhood. This is not to say that breastfeeding mothers cannot be sexual beings and should be stripped of all their sexuality and sensuality once their children are born. The point is that their bodies should not be relegated as merely sex tokens, stripped of the complexity of human identity.

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30 Josephine McKenna, "Pope Francis to Moms: It is OK to Breastfeed in Church", *U.S. Catholic* , 2015*, http://www.uscatholic.org/news/201501/pope-francis-moms-it-ok-breastfeed-church-29687.*

31 Caroline Bologna, "Bernie Sanders Reportedly Thanks Breastfeeding Mom at Rally" *Huffington Post* March 3, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/bernie-sanders-reportedly-thanks-breastfeeding-mom-at-rally_us_56d874a6e4b0000de4039adf.

Theological Repercussions

The first theological repercussion of disrupting the relationship between food and women's bodies is a brokenness in women's relationship with God, especially through the Eucharist. By emphasizing women's bodies as flesh and matter, spiritual dualism is being supported and perpetuated while simultaneously forming a paradox. Society pushes narrative for female self-worth in a particular body image, motivated by consumeristic sexualization. Females are to be sexual and sexual only. The church proposes a counter-narrative of women's body to be covered in order to retain propriety and combat the sinfulness of the body. Yet, the mindset of the church is operating under the assumption that society is correct, that women's bodies are only sexually charged. This means that both work together, perhaps unknowingly, to inhibit women identity outside the limits of sexual being only.

By reinforcing the body as sinful, with the locus of sinfulness being the female body, the bodies of women are not seen as enough or wanted by God because as they are, bodies are not seen as wanted or enough by human beings, both men and women. This affects the relationship of matter to bodies, including matter such as the Eucharist. For girls and women who have eating disorders, I can imagine it being difficult to consume the bread and wine and see them as being intrinsically good for them when their perception is food is an enemy. For women who are made to be hidden and ashamed of their bodies providing nourishment, I can imagine feeling a disconnect in embracing the body of Christ being nourishing as well.

The second theological repercussion is on the image of the Body of Christ and Christian community. Dietrich Bonhoefffer wrote, "The physical presence of other Christians is a source of incomparable joy and strength to the believer."[32] The joy comes from the center of the Christian life being rooted in Jesus Christ. It is in Christ's very nature as incarnational that we who claim to be Christians must imitate Christ, meeting one another as God has met us in Christ.[33] Yet if we are only seeing and acting upon women's bodies as sexual objects, objects to be in our control, then we are not and cannot meet women as God has met us in Christ. By allowing distortion of women's bodies to continue we are excluding them from the Body of Christ,

32 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together,* (New York: HarperCollins, 1954), 19.
33 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 25.

from community, and from seeing their physical selves as sources of joy. When we do not find joy in women's bodies as they are, we keep both men and women from the full joy found in Christian community.

The third theological repercussion is loss of self-hood. It is first lost in the detrimental mode of spiritually minded self-sacrifice. Why do women seem willing to accommodate their bodies for others? Self-sacrifice is a trait nurtured in women through the inheritance of their foremothers and supported by the church to emulate Christ on the cross. But Christ did not sacrifice himself. He was offered as a sacrifice but he did not sacrifice himself. He gave himself, a grace beyond all understanding. Self-giving, not self-sacrificing, should be the goal all Christians are encouraged to strive for. The framework of self-giving is a healthier context for the identity of servanthood, especially for women. In this framework, women are provided the freedom to have and develop a self-hood. When the bodies of women are deemed shameful and inappropriate while participating in a function that is connected to the womanly identity in motherhood, their self-perception as part of the God's ordered creation is warped.

Conclusion

Food, women, bodies, and sex are all interrelated in a complicated and shifting dialogue. However, it seems that too often women are still not a part of that dialogue as to what they want or need their bodies to be. It also is apparent that food and body images have been divorced in our society from spirituality. The consequences are detrimental, in that it 1) disrupts women's relationship with God through the sacraments, 2) disrupts the relationship with community, and 3) it has rendered obstacles which hamper women's capabilities to developing a full self-hood.

In talking about eating disorders, Saussy passionately names the dysfunction in the relationship between food and body for women as not a series of isolated incidents but a systemic problem:

The oppression and trivialization of women, the pressure to measure up to the impossible ideals, the control of their bodies in a patriarchal society – all these factors have contributed to the personal problems involved in their eating disorder.[34]

34 Carrol Saussay, 306.

It is the system that is broken – not the bodies of the girls and women. Their bodies are only treated as broken as a result of the sick system. The same argument can be made for the bodies of breastfeeding mothers, who are relegated to bathrooms or other unseen places because in the act of breast feeding they are outside the control of sexualization. Any act of shame or guilt impressed upon a young girl or woman affects them, spiritually, emotionally, and physically. There is grace in knowing that regardless of how society marrs our anatomy, it is through our fleshy, mundane human vessels that Christ is encountering us, so our bodies are covered with the fingerprints of the Divine.

Bodies do matter. There should be no doubt that bodies have influence. The physicality of bodies moves people – the birth of babies (new bodies); the deceased (gone bodies); the dying (fading bodies); and the sick (broken bodies). Each of these modes of bodies has influence in our lives. We can reason then that if bodies can affect people then people can affect bodies. Bodies influence other bodies. Unfortunately, bodies not only carry a remembrance of the Divine but collect the garbage the rest of the life accumulates. "It is as bodies that we experience the specifics of history and culture."[35] Women's bodies remember and are shaped by their remembrance. These burdens of how the Church and society treat their bodies' effects and can alter their understanding of God, because it is through human bodies that God speaks and moves through this world.

Christ became manifest among us in human form, a fully human form. For Christians, to participate in the incarnational reality opened to us through Christ, we must address and engage in healthy body talk. We must do this because body talk is God talk. If body talk is God talk, then how we talk about a woman's body is how we view God. The best way for us to restore the broken system is holistically through mending the relationship with food, bodies, and God. All of these relationally interconnected and by addressing them together, completely and whole healing will have a greater ability to occur. Then as a church, we will understand that a woman's body is beautiful. Her body is to be nourished. Her body is nourishment. Her body is Christ.

35 Dori Baker, 153.

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An Examination of 1 Peter 4:1-6

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Introduction

> [1]Therefore since Christ suffered in the flesh, you must equip the same mind, for the one who suffers in the flesh has ceased from sin [2] – no longer with the desires of humanity, but to live with the will of God for the remainder of time in the flesh. [3]For sufficient time has passed by to accomplish the purpose of non-Christians having lived in sensuality, lust, drunkenness, revelry, carousal, and unlawful idolatry [4]in which they were surprised you are not plunging with them into this flood of debauchery and revile you for it! [5]They will give account to the one who is ready to judge the ones alive and the dead. [6]For this reason the good news was preached to the dead – in order that on the one hand they might be judged according to humanity in the flesh and on the other hand that they might live according to God in the spirit.

The first letter of Peter ascribed to the Apostle himself contains perplexing grammar, syntax, and theology. Most scholars hesitate to solidly declare their interpretations in light of such perplexities. To much dismay, 1 Peter is widely neglected as a major voice in theology and biblical studies as opposed to the letters of Paul. Slowly, scholars are starting to recognize the depth and richness the text offers. One of the most perplexing portions of the letter (other than chapter three!) resides in the fourth chapter, particularly verses 1 through 6. These verses make up the pericope analyzed in this paper.

What exactly does Peter mean when he says that the "one who suffers in the flesh has ceased to sin"? The phrase removed from the context seems quite odd, at least from a 21st century Protestant Christian's perspective. Even with the phrase in its context, the meaning is confusing (if not even more so). If verse one causes confusion, then verse six will indeed cause multiple migraines, "For this reason the good news was preached to the dead."

The argument put forth in these verses is hard to determine, yet not impossible. 1 Peter 4:1-6 hinges on the theme of suffering. Suffering plagues the entire letter as the main argumentative force for the author and answers the question of how Christians should act in the midst of suffering. In order to fully grasp the contents of these weighty statements and theme of suffering, an investigation of the letter as a whole must first take place. Before getting to the detailed analysis of each verse, a look into their historical (especially the motivations behind suffering), literary, form, and rhetorical background must first be discussed.

Historical Criticism

One's approach to the text determines what data takes precedence in the interpretation of that text. For instance, if on the one hand the text claims to be written by the Apostle Peter and the data of the text is given priority over other information, then the letter was not written any later than the mid 60s AD (the traditional dating of the Apostle Peter's death).[1] This would then determine the immediate historical context. Based on that context, information gathered from other sources of that time are analyzed to gain a clearer understanding concerning the political, social, and cultural climate of that text. On the other hand, if other historical information takes priority like the letters between Pliny and Trajan that seem to match the situation in 1 Peter, then that would deem the text pseudonymous. The text would then be read into a political, social, and cultural context matching that time period (97-117 AD). The method of this work starts with the text as authoritative in what it asserts.

Since no clear statement of date in 1 Peter exists, the only evidence to go on stems from the hostility enacted against Christians by non-Christians (4:3-4). Persecution is then the deciding factor of determining the date, authorship, and context in which the letter was written.[2] The determining verse in the letter that describes the type of persecution is 5:9b, "knowing that the same experience of suffering is required of your brotherhood throughout the world" (RSV cf. 1:6; 4:12, 19; 5:12). Because of the worldwide nature of the suffering, scholars have often looked for an official persecution

1 Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1990), 10.
2 Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter,* ed. Eldon Jay Epp (Minneapolis. Minn.: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1996), 23.

of Christians enacted by the state. In that search several proposals have been made within the reign of different emperors: Nero (54-68), Vespasian and Titus (69-80), Domitian (81-96), and Trajan (97-117).[3] If the Apostle Peter truly wrote the letter, Nero would have been the emperor. Famous for the catastrophic fire of Rome and possibly the subject of the symbolic mark of the beast in Revelation,[4] Nero seems the least likely candidate as emperor during writing of 1 Peter if authorship hinges on an empire wide persecution. The fire resulted in the expulsion of Christians from Rome, regardless if Christians actually caused the fire.[5] This expulsion possibly resulted in widespread persecution within other Roman provinces, but spread of such magnitude would have taken a tremendous amount of time to become a common practice throughout all of the empire. To date, no systematic empire enacted policy against Christians during the reign of Nero exists. More likely, the event remained local[6] and caused some sporadic disfavor in other locales. Nero, however, set the precedence for later emperors to enact such policies.

One of the most major events in Judeo-Christianity occurred under the reign of Vespasian and Titus - the destruction of the temple. Since Christians were still considered by many to be a form of Judaism, the persecution of Christians took place in the nation of Israel during this time. Tacitus reported that Titus even wanted to eliminate all Christians, but again, no record of this becoming policy exists.[7] Like Nero before them, the events under Vespasian and Titus seem to have been more politically than religiously motivated and localized within the nation of Israel. Even though no record of an official policy against Christians in this time period exists, persecution definitely continued and actions like those against to the temple in Jerusalem made Christians look suspicious. For the most part however, Vespasian was seen as tolerant "acknowledged by Roman and Christian alike."[8]

The third Emperor usually discussed in regards to 1 Peter's background is Domitian. Especially in his later years, Domitian could be considered non-prejudiced. He was equally cruel to

3 Ibid., 29-32.
4 Cf. David Chilton, *Paradise Restored: A Biblical Theology of Dominion* (Ft. Worth, Tex.: Dominion Press, 1987)
5 *Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History: Complete and Unabridged,* ed. New Updated (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2006), 139.; Tacitus *Ann. 15.44* – Christians as a scapegoat
6 Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, 30.
7 *Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History: Complete and Unabridged,* 139.81.
8 Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, 30.

everyone.[9] Particular to his reasoning for this cruelty was his desire to be addressed as divine, which provoked disfavor not least among Christians, but also by many others.[10] Persecution under the reign of Domitian spanned the entire empire, but not systematically nor particularly to Christians and subsided under his successor Nerva.[11]

The last of the proposed rulers in which the audience of 1 Peter felt official empire wide persecution falls to Trajan. Interestingly, under the reign of Trajan exists evidence of a written correspondence with Pliny, one of his legates, concerning the official persecution of Christians. A key fact to understanding the importance of his correspondence concerns Pliny's location: Bithynia (cf. 1 Peter 1:1). Already with the reign of Trajan is a connection to the location of 1Peter. Another key fact concerns the topic of discussion in their correspondence. The letters between Trajan and Pliny concerned Pliny not knowing how to persecute Christians. Pliny had just taken office and, lacking knowledge of the common policy, he sought help. Trajan first responded by saying that no general policy existed, but Pliny began to force Christians to recant God and pay homage to Trajan's image in exchange for their pardon. In response to these actions, Trajan agreed.[12] Thus far, Trajan's rule seems to fit the context of 1 Peter the best of all options for empire wide official persecution, but this conclusion would place 1 Peter as pseudonymous. Are there any other options?

The argument that the persecution in 1 Peter must be considered as official and empire wide miscommunicates the letter as a whole. The references that scholars pointed to in 1 Peter representing an empire wide official persecution say no such particular idea. Also, several places in the letter point to a more local type of persecution such as 4:14, "If you are reproached for the name of Christ, you are blessed…" Feldmeier contends that 4:14 be the focal point of understanding the persecution in the letter. He writes, "This statement is revealing in two respects: as a description of the situation and as an interpretation of the situation."[13] He connects the outcome of persecution as a fiery ordeal stemming from Nero and the fire in Rome.

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9 Suetonius *Vit. 8*
10 Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, 31.
11 Ibid., 32.
12 Ibid., 32-33.
13 Reinhard Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter a Commentary of the Greek Text* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2008), 2.

Convincingly Feldmeier tracks the history of the criminalization of Christianity[14] and the development of the Caesar cult[15] which strongly linked Asian provinces to Rome.[16] The persecution of Christians took place because of their cultic practices and social requirements. Feldmeier concludes,

> The result of this was that precisely in the first Christian century, Asia blossomed into a center of the Caesar cult, which was also grimly noted in Jewish tradition (cf. 4 Ezra 15:46-49). The Johannine Apocalypse reflects this dealing with the Caesar cult in various texts (2:13; 13:1 ff.) and the tension right up to individual martyrs that stands in connection with it (cf. 2:13; 6:9f.; 17:6). But 1 Peter, despite its call of submission to the state authorities, also documents massive rejection by the world around them.[17]

Based on the external evidence provided and the internal evidence of 1 Peter, the church faced a persecution of a non-official, local, and social kind based on their unwillingness to conform to the practices of the Caesar cult (cf. 4:4).

Understanding the kind of suffering in which the audience of 1 Peter undertook helps clarify the meaning behind equipping the same mind of Christ and the suffering mentioned in 4:1. In the time period of Nero, persecution based on action (partaking in the imperial cult) prevailed over a later persecution based on mere belief or an attachment to a certain people group. The act of not partaking in the imperial cult disturbed the community's normal way of life and caused backlash from the people (more on this later – see detailed analysis 4:3-4).

These conclusions also determine Peter the Apostle as the most likely candidate for authorship and consequently sets the date of the writing in the mid 60s AD. The audience of the letter is not as straightforward. Some of the internal evidence points to a Jewish audience (1:1; 2:11 – diaspora;1:24; 2:6; 3:10-12; 4:18; 5:5; etc.),[18] while other internal evidence points to a Gentile audience (1:14, 18;

14 Ibid., 3-5.
15 Ibid., 6-7.
16 Ibid., 10-12.
17 Ibid., 13; See also John Hall Elliott, *Conflict, Community, and Honor: 1 Peter in Social-scientific Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2007)
18 Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 61-66.

2:10, 25; 4:3-4; etc.).[19] The majority of commentators side with the decision that Gentile Christians dominated the church in Asia Minor, although a few disagree. Probably the best way to understand the audience of 1 Peter is with a plenary view. Since it is impossible to deduce the number of ethnic participants (which group outnumbered the other) based on the text as it stands, trying to calculate such a number or trying to determine a simple majority is erroneous. Rather, based on the conclusion that Peter the Apostle wrote the letter, it is no wonder Jewish idiomatic phrases, allusions, and quotes permeate the letter. With the evidences of Acts (2:14-41) and Peter's ability to speak, it would be wise to assume that Peter knows how to appeal to a mixed audience regardless of how many of each particular ethnic group made up the audience. 1 Peter was also circulated, distributed amongst many different churches with different people of different backgrounds. Thus, when Peter wrote this letter he was well aware of the possible mixed audience and, while using his own knowledge and background, accommodated his speech to be readily acceptable to whomever would listen.

Literary, Form, and Rhetorical Criticism

Though not easily identifiable, commentators build their outlines of the text based on several different presuppositional forms. Witherington on the one hand establishes that 1 Peter, though clearly exhibiting epistolary elements, cannot fit rigidly to the form of an epistle.[20] Because of the nonconforming text, he views Peter as combining a form of Asiatic Rhetoric[21] within the epistolary form and argues that 1 Peter 4:1-6 falls into the third rhetorical argument of peace beginning with 3:13 and ending with 4:11 concerning suffering and self-control.[22] Feldmeir, on the other hand groups the text with 2:13-4:6, stating that it deals with a "Christian's way of living within a society that confronts them with an attitude ranging from distrustful to hostile,"[23] although he agrees with Witherington on the point of 3:13-4:6 as a rhetorical plea within the refutatio of the argument

19 Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 8-9; Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, 51.
20 Ben Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic ;, 2006), 45.
21 Ibid., 42-45.
22 Ibid., 170-174.
23 Reinhard Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter a Commentary of the Greek Text*, 150.

concerning the Christians' current suffering.[24] n another line of argumentation, Peter H. Davids categorizes 2:11-4:11 as relating to societal institutions with 4:1-11 referring to "exhortation to firmness in the end times" without much explanation.[25] Achtemeier divides the letter similarly to Davids, but does so in much smaller sections. Beyond the 2:11-4:11 distinction he then breaks 3:8-4:11 into another subsection and 4:1-6 into yet another. He shows how the letter has been proposed as composite, made up of originally two letters melded into one.[26] His argument relies on change in style, tense, and the breaking up of themes such as baptism.[27] But why does this have to suggest two composite letters? It simply does not. The author switches tense to talk about what the audience experienced in the past versus what they may or will experience in the future. There is no need to repeat certain themes if the theme is already fully addressed within the writing. Based on the text, 3:13-4:11 clearly makes up a unit based on the similar language like the flood (3:20; 4:4), suffering as a witness (3:15; 4:1), and speaking to those in another realm (3:19;4:6). 4:7-11 ties into the theme of how to act towards other people, first in 4:1-6 with outsiders and second in 4:7-11 with insiders.

A few different forms of the literature have been proposed by scholars. One of the most common and significant forms takes the shape of a baptismal ceremony. Achtemeier goes into depth with why this pericope fits within the mold of a baptismal ceremony.[28] The mere mention of baptism in 3:21 and the flood language of 4:4 hints at this form. Reicke affirms that 4:1-6, particularly the "equipping" language of 4:1, conforms to a "baptismal ceremony, in which there occurred a real or symbolic putting on of certain items of clothing."[29] Some affirm that a portion of chapter three possibly concerns a baptismal ceremony and 4:1-6 relate to life thereafter.[30] Rather than just a baptismal ceremony, Selwyn argues for a whole catechetical structure.[31] However, as Davids points out, this is unlikely due to

24 Ibid., 191-192.
25 Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 28.
26 Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, 73.
27 Ibid., 58-61.
28 Ibid., 58-59.
29 Bo Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), 116-17.
30 J. Ramsey Michaels, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter* (Waco, TX.: Word, 1988), 224-225.
31 Edward Gordon Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Essays* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1981), 363.

the lack of evidence.[32] Feldmeier refutes the entire literary-critical hypothesis, so "'homiletic composition,' an 'edifying homily,' 'a baptismal address,' even datable in Easter week, a 'circular letter for the Passover Festival,' the order of a baptismal service in the Church in Rome, or similar definitions" are invalidated.[33] 1 Peter, in his view, should be considered in a strict epistolary form. This conclusion might appear extreme, yet is somewhat valid. Letter attributes of the piece cannot be ignored (1:1, 3; 5:12-14), but Feldmeier mistakenly requires Peter to fit a mold in his writing. It is best to conclude then that 1 Peter loosely fits the mold of a letter with an Asiatic Rhetorical flavor, 4:1-6 belonging to the refutatio and scattered with other types of literary forms such as hymnody (2:22-25).

Detailed Scriptural Analysis

The Text

> **1** Χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος σαρκὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὁπλίσασθε, ὅτι ὁ παθὼν σαρκὶ πέπαυται ἁμαρτίας **2** εἰς τὸ μηκέτι ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις ἀλλὰ θελήματι θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιῶσαι χρόνον. **3** ἀρκετὸς γὰρ ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἐθνῶν κατειργάσθαι πεπορευμένους ἐν ἀσελγείαις, ἐπιθυμίαις, οἰνοφλυγίαις, κώμοις, πότοις καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίαις. **4** ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται μὴ συντρεχόντων ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν βλασφημοῦντες, **5** οἳ ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον τῷ ἑτοίμως ἔχοντι κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς. **6** εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη, ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκὶ ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι.

The text maintains a strong witness with very little variation.[34] Verse 1 varies within the wording of παθόντος σαρκὶ which some manuscripts[35] attest to ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν being inserted between the two terms – *suffered in the flesh on our behalf*. Other manuscripts[36] insert ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν between the same two words, and some add ἐν[37] -

32 Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 13.
33 Reinhard Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter a Commentary of the Greek Text*, 30-31.
34 Eberhard Nestle, *Novum Testamentum Graece, Greek-English New Testament. Greek Text Novum Testamentum Graece.* (27th Revised ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013), 605.
35 א^{c} A K P M 33 81 614 Aug^{pt} Cyr Byz Lect syr^{h} cop^{bo}
36 69 1505 2495 syr^{p} al (vg^{ms})
37 049$^{(c)}$ (z) vg sa?

suffered in the flesh on your behalf. And only one other manuscript[38] replace παθόντος with ἀποθάνοντος and add ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν. – *died in the flesh on our behalf*. A minute variation also occurs with only a few manuscripts[39] changing the plural dative ἁμαρτίαις with the genitive singular ἁμαρτίας, which could simply be a scribal error. Verse 2 contains two variations. The first variation substitutes σῶσαι for βιῶσαι[40] possibly showing a physical safety from outsiders. And the other substitutes ἀνθρώπου for θεοῦ[41] – *will of humanity* (as opposed to *desires of humanity* earlier in the verse). Verse 3 variants add either ὑμῖν [42] or ἡμῖν [43] after γὰρ in the beginning of the verse, but the absence of either of the clarifiers is superior[44] – *for you/us*. There is also attestation of both βούλημα[45] and θελήμα[46] in reference to the non-Christians. These two terms are translated as "will," yet contain a slightly nuanced meaning. Both cases can be argued as acceptable. θελήμα could be used to compare the will of God and will of non-Christians with the type of "will" being the same, but the one who directs that "will" as being different. βούλημα could be used to contrast the type of will employed by the two different parties. Neither one changes the overall meaning and force of the text. Verse 4 contains a difficult variant that could change the meaning of the one reviled. Some manuscripts[47] attest to καὶ βλασφημοῦσιν rather than βλασφημοῦντες.[48] The difference in the two terms makes the reviling directed at either God or at the audience of the letter. The more difficult reading is βλασφημοῦντες, yet it matches the context of the pericope. Verse 5 has a variation in the idiomatic phrase of τῷ ἑτοίμως ἔχοντι κρῖναι which some manuscripts[49] change to τῷ ἑτοίμως κρίνοντι. This change in phrasing does not affect the meaning of the idiom. No textual variations occur in verse 6. The critical text put forth by the United Bible Society will remain intact due to the overwhelming evidence for its support or the irrelevance of meaning change of several variants.

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38 א
39 א B Ψ *pc* latt
40 P^{72}
41 א
42 א 630 *pm* bo; Aug^{pt}
43 C K L P 049 69 623 2298; Hier
44 P^{72} א A B Ψ Syr Lat
45 P^{72} א A B C Ψ
46 P M
47 א C 81 323 945 1241 1739 *al*
48 P^{72} $א^{c}$ A B C^{2} P Ψ 049 M Latt sy^{h}
49 B Ψ (81) (C^{vid}) 614 630 1852 *al* sy^{h}

Comment

4:1a – Χριστοῦ οὖν παθόντος σαρκὶ / Therefore since Christ suffered in the flesh:

The inferential conjunction οὖν marks this section as contingent upon the preceding section and not as a demarcation from it because of the following phrase with Christ suffering in the flesh. This reference points the reader back to 3:18 and the imitatio of 2:22-25.[50] It shows not only the pragmatic outcome of his suffering, but also the spiritual outcome. Ramsey suggests that the term "suffer" used in 3:18 is indistinguishable from "death" and consequently interprets the "ceasing from sin" phrase later in the verse to refer to death.[51] Unfortunately, to interpret the phrase "ceasing from sin" as mere death ignores the contingence of verse 2 that speaks of living the remainder of life in that way.

4:1b – καὶ ὑμεῖς τὴν αὐτὴν ἔννοιαν ὁπλίσασθε, / you must equip to same mind:

The term ὁπλίσασθε is exceedingly striking within this context. With a root meaning of preparing (meals, sacrifices, horses, ships, lamps, etc.),[52] ὁπλίσασθε is defined overwhelmingly as a military term (cf. Jer. 52:25).[53] It appears as contradictory in this usage. The equipping, warlike language is perhaps not what suffering people want to hear. Rather the opposite would be expected: *Arm yourselves with weapons and defend yourselves so you don't suffer! Don't let these people make you suffer, that is a sign of weakness!* Peter uses this warlike metaphor ironically to cut straight to the heart of his audience, basically commanding them to *arm themselves with more suffering!* It is as though Peter tells them not only to be resilient with the mind of Christ against evil (following verses), as to gain strength from Christ's example, but also to suffer in order to gain strength. The believers are to equip themselves with the wisdom or resolve that Christ had when he suffered;[54] Jesus was after all fully human and had a mind that one could model him/herself after.[55]

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50 Greg W. Forbes, *1 Peter,* ed. Andreas J. Kostenberger and Robert W. Yarbrough (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2014. Kindle Edition), Location 4249.
51 J. Ramsey Michaels, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter* (Waco, TX.: Word, 1988), 225-229.
52 Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Geoffrey William Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1964), 294-295.
53 Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 716.
54 Pheme Perkins, *First and Second Peter, James, and Jude* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1995) 67.
55 Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, 265.

4:1c – ὅτι ὁ παθὼν σαρκὶ πέπαυται ἁμαρτίας / for the one who suffers in the flesh has ceased from sin:

Of all six verses in this pericope, this portion of verse 1 and the first part of verse 6 pose the largest controversy and debate. What individual does the phrase "the one who" refer to? What does it mean to suffer and cease from sin? Witherington lists several different possible interpretations to these questions.[56] (1) Suffering atones for sins; (2) Suffering causes the believer to stop sinning; (3) Dead to sin, alive to Christ; (4) Idiom for death (which stops one from sinning); (5) Suffering purifies the believer from sin; (6) he who suffers refers to Christ and not Christians.[57] The first of these contradicts not only basic Christian doctrine, but also the immediate context because Christ is the only one that atones for sin (3:18), unless of course the one who suffers refers to Christ himself. Witherington affirms option two as most viable. If suffering causes the believer to stop sinning, then the solution to the vice list in 4:3 is suffering and not Christ. Under this premise, the verse encourages people to stop sinning by seeking out suffering. Option three reads Pauline thought into the text. Though not improbable, it is unlikely for Peter to use this theme without the corresponding "alive to Christ." Option four obviously speaks truth. If someone dies then they sin no longer because they are dead. This is a possibility, especially if Ramsey correctly understands the suffering in the first part of 4:1. However, as mentioned previously, this neglects the command to live in a particular way in the subsequent verses. Option five read too much into the text. Peter already established a way of speaking about purifying (1:7, 22), so this phrase seems outside of his conventional way of speaking on this topic. The options up to this point refer to Christians as the ones who suffer, but what if the one who suffers is Christ? Firstly, understanding the phrase in this way neglects the closest antecedent (the ones commanded to equip themselves). Though not possible due to the multiple examples of distant antecedents in the Greek text, the closer antecedent more simply and readily connects the phrase.

Secondly and more importantly, if Christ is the one who suffers in this phrase, then this implies that Christ at one point in time sinned. In order for someone to stop sining, sin would have had to occur

56 Ben Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, 195.
57 Joel B. Green, 1 *Peter: Two Horizons New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2007. Kindle Edition), Location 1598.

previously, so perhaps another option is required. If the ὅτι clause (ὅτι ὁ παθὼν σαρκὶ) epexegetically refers to the content of mind[58] and the outcome of suffering produces no sin, then what is the point of 4:2-4? More than likely the meaning of "ceased from sin" is found in the proceeding verses. Consequently, 4:2-4 should be read as an expounding of what "ceased from sin" actually means. This is very similar to Feldmeier's view of being "dead to sin" with a requirement of effort – "equip."[59]

4:2 - εἰς τὸ μηκέτι ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις ἀλλὰ θελήματι θεοῦ τὸν ἐπίλοιπον ἐν σαρκὶ βιῶσαι χρόνον. / no longer with the desires of humanity, but to live with the will of God for the remainder of time in the flesh.:

The most common simple explanation of verse two compares two ways of living - living in the will of God or in the will of humanity.[60] However, multiple suggestions of interpretation exist. The preposition εἰς plus the articular infinitive means either, result (NIV),[61] cause (NJB), or purpose[62] and refers back to either the mind of Christ[63] or to the ceasing from sin. Possibly not one of these views takes into consideration the exact nuance in which Peter puts forth. More than likely the prepositional phrase relates to the closest antecedent (ceasing from sin), but cannot neatly fit into the categories of result, cause, or purpose. Though purpose most likely describes the effect of εἰς, the problem lies with defining the purpose. Peter probably intends to expound upon what ceasing from sin means in this purposeful statement. This interpretation allows the thought to flow without speculation. *Christ suffered – you put on the same attitude he had when he suffered – when you suffer you cease from sin – This "ceasing from sin" is defined by being in the will of God and staying away from your former life (full of sin).*

4:3a – ἀρκετὸς γὰρ ὁ παρεληλυθὼς χρόνος τὸ βούλημα τῶν ἐθνῶν / For sufficient time has passed by to accomplish the purpose of non-Christians:

Achtemeier rightly states that "the conjunction γὰρ ("because")

58 Greg W. Forbes, *1 Peter*, Location 4278.
59 Reinhard Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter a Commentary of the Greek Text*, 213.
60 I. Howard Marshall, *1 Peter* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 134.
61 Allen Black and Mark C. Black, *1 & 2 Peter* (Joplin, Mo.: College Press Pub., 1998), S. 1 Pe 4:1; Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 147.
62 Greg W. Forbes, *1 Peter,* Location 4314.
63 J. Ramsey Michaels, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, 229-30.

indicates that this verse justifies the command in vv. 1-2 to arm themselves with an understanding of suffering so they no longer act in a way God does not approve."[64] The phrase "for sufficient time has passed by" directly relates to the phrase "remainder of time" in the preceding verse. They are diametrically opposed, stating a point of change which occurred in the lives of these believers.

Traditionally, ἐθνῶν translates as gentiles or pagans, but within this context non-Christian seems more appropriate (NLT and CEV). The most basic meaning to ἐθνῶν is a people group foreign to a specific people group.[65] The people group mentioned in this context refers not to a specific race (as Gentiles would imply), but to a specific group at odds with the larger community. Understanding ἐθνῶν in this way matches the understanding that the audience makeup contains both Jew and Gentile. Some argue that the list in this verse demands that the audience be gentiles because

> Jews had long noted and detested this connection of vice with idolatry (e.g., Wisd. 14:12-27), but it was not an issue for them since they were considered a colony of a foreign nation within the Greek cities and so were permitted to follow their own customs and laws. These Christians, on the other hand, had been part of the culture, so their non-participation was a change in behavior and thus quite noticeable.[66]

Claiming that Jews did not participate in sin misses the personification of a sinful humanity. Just because a people group as a whole or even an individual of a people group disapprove of a particular action does not mean that they possess the inability to perform that action. Marshall succinctly emphasizes this point when he states,

> The reference to pagan pursuits need not imply that the readers were all former pagans, Jews too were quite capable of falling into such sins. The point is rather that these were the kind of practices one might expect from people without any knowledge of God, whereas the Jews should know better.[67]

4:3b - κατειργάσθαι πεπορευμένους ἐν ἀσελγείαις, ἐπιθυμίαις,

64 Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, 281.
65 Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* 276-277.
66 Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 151.
67 I. Howard Marshall, *1 Peter*, 135.

οἰνοφλυγίαις, κώμοις, πότοις καὶ ἀθεμίτοις εἰδωλολατρίαις. / having lived in sensuality, lust, drunkenness, revelry, carousal, and unlawful idolatry:

Peter employs a vice list much like one of the lists Paul uses in Rom. 13:13 and Gal. 5:19-21. For the most part, commentators try not to analyze this list in detail because the vices are "given in the plural to indicate categories of activities rather than individual acts…"[68] Rather than a compilation of specific sins to avoid, this list exemplifies the daily activity of an Asia Minor resident. John H. Elliott in his monumental work on the socio-cultural environment of 1 Peter wrote that these vices "were typical of guild celebrations. But for converts to Christianity such behavior constituted 'lawless idolatry' and wild excess from which the believers were to dissociate themselves, even in the face of abuse from their former cronies."[69] The actions in which Peter exhorts his audience to not partake in are not necessarily obvious and socio-culturally negative, but rather a normal part of life.[70] A particular act in which the believers removed themselves from concerned a sort of dinner party. At these parties drinking and other immoral acts ensued and veneration of gods permeated throughout the event.[71] So, the type of suffering these believers experienced conforms not to death like that of Christ, but more like social pressure and name calling (sometimes resulting in physical abuse) which Peter mentioned earlier in 2:22, "When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he trusted to him who judges justly."

4:4a - ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται μὴ συντρεχόντων ὑμῶν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τῆς ἀσωτίας ἀνάχυσιν / in which they are surprised you are not plunging with them into this flood of debauchery:

Because of the believers' removal from normal societal activity, the non-Christians in their community treat them unkindly. The counter-cultural acts described in 4:3 and summarized in 4:4a produce a specific outcome. The word for debauchery possibly involves a wordplay. ἀσωτίας looks awfully close to the word for savior (σωτήρ) or salvation (σωτηρίας) perhaps saying that the one who is

68 Paul J. Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter*, 282.
69 John Hall Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Fortress Press, 1981), 70.
70 Douglas Karel Harink, *1 & 2 Peter* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2009), 107.
71 Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 695.

not saved does these things.[72] Though completely speculative, it is important to look at the word choice within this verse. For instance, the word ἀνάχυσιν literally means "pouring out" or "wide stream,"[73] but when used figuratively the word means "flood," which brings the reader back to the language used in 3:20 and the flood of Noah.

4:4b - βλασφημοῦντες, / and revile you for it!:

Non-Christian neighbors felt shame when the believers denied their dinner invitations or other social activities, which invoked their wrath. Their reviling, or more literally blaspheming, has no object in the Greek and because of this scholars interpret this in two different ways. The object of the non-Christian's reviling points either to God or to the local believers. The first option seems convincing because it transitions well into the next verse that would normally be seen as an abstract saying. Since the non-Christians blaspheme God they will answer to the one ready to judge. Option two is also convincing because it ties together the whole context preceding the blaspheming. The believers get abused verbally because of their lack of participation in the cultural activities and suffer the same way Christ suffered (2:22).[74] Though the second option fits better overall, its exclusivity reduces the next verse to abstract thought removed from the context. Peter could have wisely chosen the term to mean both options, as a transitional. By verbally abusing the believers, they blaspheme the God the believers represent and by blaspheming God the believers feel the immediate ramifications.

4:5 - οἳ ἀποδώσουσιν λόγον τῷ ἑτοίμως ἔχοντι κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς. / They will give account to the one who is ready to judge the ones alive and the dead:

Judging the living and the dead is a formulaic and idiomatic phrase meaning everyone (cf. 2:23; 2 Tim. 4:1; Acts 10:42).[75] Although this phrase is normative and idiomatic, there is no reason for the dead (νεκρού) not to refer to the actual dead. The importance of this term comes in its connection to verse 6 and the preaching to the dead. The unclear portion of this verse concerns why the people

72 Leonhard Goppelt and Ferdinand Hahn, *A Commentary on I Peter* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1993), 274.
73 Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,* 63.
74 J. Ramsey Michaels, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, 232-34.
75 Ben Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, 197; Reinhard Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter a Commentary of the Greek Text*, 214.

will have to give account and be judged. Some say that the judging happens due to the people rejecting the good news about Christ,[76] due to their blaspheming the believers,[77] or, based on the idiomatic phrase, the judgment coming concerns everyone. The last option seems best and makes this phrase harsh for those attacking the believers and comforting for those being attacked.[78] For those that do not have an end in mind, a judgement to which they are held accountable, will continue in their deeds without ceasing poking fun at all those that do.[79]

4:6a - εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ νεκροῖς εὐηγγελίσθη / for this reason the good news was preached to the dead:

The first part of verse 6 poses an idea that, to the modern reader, is completely foreign. Because of this foreignness and far removal from the worldviews of the first century, much debate surrounds the passage. Who preached the good news? Why was it preached? Is it a literal talking to the dead? These questions amongst others come to mind when reading this verse. Several options arise concerning the identity of the dead. (1) Fallen angels;[80] (2) Believers that heard the message, but are now dead;[81] (3) Spiritually dead;[82] (4) All those who died before Christ.[83] Before discussing these options, some key linguistic items must be addressed. In this instance γὰρ not only refers back to the dead and the judgment in verse five, but also towards the ἵνα clause showing reason for the preaching in verse six. The term for "preach" here, εὐηγγελίσθη, is in the passive form. Some commentators claim that because of the passive form the implied subject being preached is Christ and not Christ as the one preaching.[84] Others have claimed that the implied subject refers to the

76 James Luther Mays, *The Harper-Collins Bible Commentary*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper, 2000), 1172.
77 Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 695.
78 Reinhard Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter a Commentary of the Greek Text*, 214.
79 Douglas Karel Harink, *1 & 2 Peter*, 109-110.
80 cf. 1 Thess. 4:13-18
81 Scot McKnight, *1 Peter: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 1996), 227.; Ben Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians,* 198.; Karel Harink, *1 & 2 Peter*, 110-111.; Thomas R. Schreiner, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Peter, Jude* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 198.; Mark Dubis, *1 Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2010), 137-138.
82 Clement of Alexandria amongst other early church fathers; William J. Dalton, *Christ's Proclamation to the Spirits: A Study of 1 Peter 3:18-4:6*, 2nd Fully Rev. ed. (Roma: Editrice Pontifico Istituto Biblico, 1989), 56.
83 Joel B. Green, *1 Peter: Two Horizons New Testament Commentary*, Location 1640.; Bo Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, 204.
84 Ben Witherington, *Letters and Homilies for Hellenized Christians*, 197.

word.[85] Unfortunately both of these options are not found anywhere close to the immediate context. Christ was last mentioned in 4:1 and the one who judges in 4:5 is not identified. It is best to understand the term as impersonal considering the lack of evidence for the preceding two options.[86]

The four main options of interpretation must now be considered. Immediately, the first option can be eliminated because Peter mentions angels only twice (1:12; 3:22) and nowhere in the immediate context. The dead referred to in verse five are the same dead mentioned in verse six (though if the idiom does mean everyone, it is possible that the dead includes, but is not limited to, angels). Option two is definitely the most popular option in current scholarship. This option speaks sensibly to the modern reader and fits the context of comfort to the suffering in 1 Peter (2:18 25; 3 :8- 12, 13 17, 18 21; 4: 12- 19; 5:8- 10). One of the main arguments of this position depends on the disjointing of 4:6 with 3:19. Proponents claim that the proclaiming to spirits in 3:19 indeed refers to the dead, but the term used in 3:19 ἐκήρυξεν differs from 4:6. Also, ἐκήρυξεν takes on the aorist tense signifying a past completed action differing once again from 4:6. This disjointing between the two points towards two different events, one referring to a proclamation to the imprisoned spirits and the other to a preaching to those now dead. Green combats this understanding and proposes the age old interpretation of Christ descent into Hades preaching the good news to those who lacked the opportunity before the incarnation.[87] He argues that this historical view must be taken seriously as a valid interpretation. Theophylact of Ohrid (ca. 1050-ca. 1108) stated in his commentary,

> It was the habit of the Fathers to take this verse completely out of context. They therefore said that the word dead has two different meanings in Scripture, referring either to those who are dead in their sins and who never lived at all or to those who have been made conformable to the death of Christ, as Paul said: 'The life that I now live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God.'[Gal. 2:20] But if they had paid the slightest attention to the context, they would have seen that

85 John Hall Elliott, *1 Peter*, New ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007), 732.
86 J. Ramsey Michaels, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, 236.
87 Joel B. Green, *1 Peter: Two Horizons New Testament Commentary*, Location 1598-1866.; cf. Odes of Solomon; Theophylact's *Commentary on 1 Peter*

> the dead are those who have been shut up in hell, to whom Christ went to preach after his death on the cross.[88]

The spirits in 3:19, according to the majority of scholars, refer to the fallen angels of Gen. 6:1-6 from which Green sees an overlap with 3:22, yet not identical.[89] This overlap between does not stop in chapter three, but continues into chapter four. He states,

> we should not be surprised to find in 1 Pet. 4:6 a parallel activity to that recorded in 3:19, though this time with manifestly human recipients of the good news. Although many interpreters hold that Peter refers to Christians who have already died, this argument presumes what is not in evidence in 1 Peter - namely, a context of anxiety over the fate of Christians who have died prior to Christ's return as in 1 Thessalonians.[90]

The argument seems solid, for even Feldmeier states that the connection between 3:19 and 4:6 seems unforced and Christ preaching to the dead before the incarnation should be seen as a possibility.[91] The major stumbling block to this interpretation is the lack of New Testament evidence. The odd statement of baptizing on behalf of the dead in 1 Cor. 15:29, or other possible attestations of Christ's descent into Hades lends to this sort of idea (Acts 2:27; Phil. 2:10-11; Rom. 14:9; etc.), but the evidence is still lacking. Though some possible references imply Christ's descent, there are no explicit statements in the New Testament. However, the history of interpretation speaks as a strong evidence to this interpretation. Green once again argues,

> All of this means that we need not jettison early Christian interpretation of Peter's work and the tradition it represents. From the early second century on, Peter was widely regarded as referring to Christ's descent into Hades in order that he might (1) share fully the fate of humanity, (2) conquer Death
>
> or Hades (or both), (3) rescue the righteous dead, and/or (4)

88 Gerald Lewis Bray, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude*, Vol. 11 (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 114.
89 Joel B. Green, *1 Peter: Two Horizons New Testament Commentary*, Location 1631.
90 Ibid., 1713.
91 Reinhard Feldmeier, *The First Letter of Peter a Commentary of the Greek Text*, 215-216.

proclaim salvation to the dead.[92]

4:6b - ἵνα κριθῶσι μὲν κατὰ ἀνθρώπους σαρκὶ ζῶσι δὲ κατὰ θεὸν πνεύματι. / in order that on the one hand they might be judged according to humanity in the flesh and on the other hand that they might live according to God in the Spirit.:

Peter likes to speak in terms of contrasting pairs: flesh versus spirit (3:18), the will of humanity versus the will of God (4:2), the living versus the dead (4:5), and flesh (judge) versus spirit (life) (4:6). The term living qualified by spirit seems to point to eternal life.[93] However, an affirmation of the Eastern Orthodox theology of theosis with the κατὰ qualifying θεὸν seems present. More likely, this phrase corresponds with the "having ceased from sin" in 4:1 and with the "will of God" in 4:2 showing how one is enabled to actually live in this sort of holy way (cf. 1:1). Some commentators have suggested that the judgment in the flesh corresponds specifically to 4:2,[94] as a sort of condemnation or blasphemy brought about by the people due to not following the cultural norms. These scholars argue that living in the spirit means living by the will of God (4:2). Others take the judgment in the flesh to mean physical death which would make sense since immediately following Peter speaks of a life in the spirit.[95] Since this connects directly as a reason why the gospel was preached to the dead, it seems to make sense. The gospel brings life to the hearer, regardless if they are physically dead.

Theological Analysis

As with most of the New Testament message, 1 Peter 4:1-6 is completely counter cultural. What does it mean to suffer in the flesh and therefore cease to sin? It means living up to God's standards and his will for humanity and not humanity's own desires. This goes along with what Paul takes about when he speaks of old nature and new nature. The new nature is consumed by the will of God; the old nature is consumed by one's own desires. Peter also contributes to the discussion of being dead. Though this may be metaphorical, it seems highly unlikely due to Peter's literal use of suffering, the

92 Joel B. Green, *1 Peter: Two Horizons New Testament Commentary*, Location 1726.
93 Allen Black and Mark C. Black, *1 & 2 Peter*, S. 1 Pe 4:1
94 J. Ramsey Michaels, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter*, 238.
95 Wayne A. Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 171.

literal use of dead in the preceding verse (literal because he was speaking of those that will be dead with the end soon coming), and the following verse where it says that "the end of all things is near" (4:7). He also contributes to the discussion of freedom. Freedom in Christ is confined by limitations of what is sinful. Being free does not mean that one does anything. He makes that clear with the vice list. 1 Peter 4:1-6, if not the entire writing, should be read as an "in Christ" (5:10, 14) appeal to its readers (both past and present), meaning that the audience should not collapse under pressure,not give way to old habits, but find fulfillment in Christ. In Christ – having the mind of Christ – one sees positivity in suffering. In Christ, one currently experiences salvation in its fullness.

Application

> The apostle Peter gave this comfort to those of us who are bound by the chains of persecution – Bede[96]
>
> In order that Christ might be believed to be the Savior of all, according to their appropriation of his incarnation, he assumed the sufferings of his own flesh, as was foretold in Isaiah [50:6]: 'I gave my back to lashes, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; I did not turn away my face from the disgrace of their spittings. – Cyril of Alexandria[97]

Depending on how one interprets this verse, affects its application in current situations. It could suggest (1) a way of life in light of judgment, (2) a Christocentric lifestyle,[98] or (3) a way to life.[99] Each of these applications are advantageous. (1) When looking from the perspective that all will be judged by the one ready to do so (1 Peter 4:5), the sense of preparation for that time becomes heightened. Though it is true that the fear of judgment sometimes promotes healthy actions, the individual as a whole does not benefit. The lacking part of this equation makes its appearance in Christ. (2) With Christ at the center of this passage, the moralistic nature of option one becomes less forceful. Christ suffered in human form, not just his flesh, but *in the flesh.* A balance between understanding God's awesome power

96 Gerald Lewis Bray, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude*, 112.
97 Ibid., 111.
98 cf. Scot McKnight, *1 Peter: The NIV Application Commentary*, 232.
99 cf. J. Ramsey Michaels, Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter, 241-242.

and judgement of everyone's actions and understanding the Christ who suffers with humanity and who sets free, needs to be made. (3) A synthesis of the two comes to fruition in this text as a way to life. Peter in 4:2 speaks of *living* by the will of God and again in 4:6 he states that the good news was preached to the *dead* so that they may *live*. After putting on the mind of Christ in any circumstance, while avoiding sin, the believer is welcomed into a state of living, in which they had never experience before. Even those who have literally died before Christ are offered the one thing that gives life – Jesus.

This pericope also gives generally applicable advice. It instructs against certain categorical practices that, to some extent, can be applied today such as orgies and drunkenness. These practices let the reader know that sometimes people need to go against the culture, family, or friends in order to live by the will of God. It also lets contemporary audiences know that solace exists in knowing that though Christians should prepare to suffer, the suffering is not done alone, but done with Christ. God is just and these verses attest to it. Peter gave some well thought out pastoral advice to his recipients. They suffered and he addressed it – *Christ, in his incarnation, suffers with you*. If Christ descended into hades in order to give everyone the opportunity to embrace his everlasting love, then he will make sure that everyone on earth will have that opportunity.

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My Developing Theology of Pastoral Care

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Introduction

"This is my body, which is broken for you."

In reflecting on my own theology of pastoral care I first had to consider the use of the modifier "pastoral" because it identifies the specific kind of caregiving we in our field would be providing. It has deep Biblical roots with many examples of God as the Father or the Son being referred to as a shepherd with His flock in His pastoral care. Of course the best known reference is from Psalms 23: "The LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He restores my soul." I considered whether my theology of pastoral care could be modeled on this imagery, but I quickly came to reject it. In the case of Jesus Christ, He is both man and Divine so it is in His nature to be our shepherd. He is more than any one of us can be. We are mortal and human, not divine; so we ourselves cannot serve as shepherds for our fellow sheep. We are saved by Jesus. Since we ourselves cannot provide salvation in our pastoral care ministries we must remember this. I came to see in my theology of pastoral care that I am not like a shepherd. So what then am I? On what bases could I develop my own theology of pastoral care?

In order to do that I have tried to synthesize all of what I have learned in the broadest sense. This includes my life as a Christian brought up in the Anglican Communion, my academic training first as a cultural anthropologist and now as a seminarian, and most personally, my reflection as a Gay man and long-term survivor of HIV/AIDS. A summary of those reflections is what follows.

Theological Reflections

Because I grew up in the Episcopal Church, it is the two central Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion that are most life-giving

to me and their power to heal. This is what underpins my theological refection on pastoral care-giving. At first I wasn't able to understand why these liturgical practices seemed so powerful to me but with repeated experience of each, the reading Scripture, Christian history and theological texts, studying anthropology, and continual reflection I was able to articulate not only what they mean to me but also how they inform my approach to pastoral pastoral care. In Baptism, in the Anglican Communion, any believer who is baptized is saved. Salvation comes from God through the Holy Spirit not the baptizer and the Bishop or Rector baptizing the individual simply serves as a conduit to God's saving grace through the sacrament. Baptism in my tradition is the entry way into the Church and each of the baptized are a part of the body of Christ.

My reflection on this belief has been crucial in how I have viewed myself as a gay man, or anyone who is marginalized, as being worthy of salvation *in God's* eyes. Its implication in my developing theology of pastoral care is that no one, no matter how broken they may feel or have been made to feel by others is any less deserving of God's grace than anyone else. In the Eucharist too, the priest also serves as the channel, not the actual provider, of all the benefits that Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection provides Christians. All who are baptized may come to the Table and receive Holy Communion. All Christians are equally part of God's community on earth, whether we are straight, gay, male, female, rich, poor, black, or white. I came to understand that in ministry, in my faith, a member of the clergy is not placed above the congregation. He or she is not so much a shepherd but an instrument of God's love. This also meant to me that all Christians must rely on the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit to experience the healing of their brokenness and, in my role as a pastoral care-giver it is God who is ultimately the pastoral care-giver, not myself.

In one additional way, my faith tradition also validates my belief that we all are broken and that I as a pastoral care-giver can draw upon my own brokenness in my ministry of pastoral care. As Michael Ramsey, the 100th Archbishop of Canterbury and noted Anglican theologian wrote " [the Anglican Church] is not sent to commend itself as 'the best type of Christianity,' but by its very brokenness to point to the universal Church wherein all have died."[1] This emphasizes for

1 Michael Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, (London: Wipf and Stock Pub.,2008) Location 3336 of 3728.

Anglicans that our state of being, the state of being of the Church is brokenness. In our ministries we are one with those we minister to and we are as broken and in need of God's healing as any one of them. It is a regular part of the Anglican service to recite the following confession, taken from our Book of Common Prayer:

> Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.
>
> We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
>
> We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
>
> For the sake of your son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen.

With this in mind, I know that my salvation is in Christ and I rely on that and the legacy of my beliefs as an Episcopalian in all that I do. They illuminate my lived human experience as a gay man and long-term survivor of HIV in a profound way. It is only with God's grace that I am still here when so many of my peers died long ago from HIV and it is also only with His grace that I am here at the seminary.

Let me explain how my belief in God's healing love infuses how I see and try to live my life by telling a story. The other day I went to see my doctor for my six month checkup necessary because I am HIV positive. We talked about my health, my latest blood work, my drug regimen; all the usual topics we cover during one of my semi-annual checkups. But then somehow my doctor started telling me about how most of her patients who are long-term survivors of HIV feel guilty because they survived when so many of their friends did not, and are depressed and essentially waiting to die. She asked me why I seemed different from them. I told her it was because I had asked God why He had given me the gift of an extended, purpose driven life and tried to discern His answer. I believe the purpose is so I could serve Him in this world. This is why I decided to go to seminary. He has a mission for me to complete. As the philosopher James K.A. Smith explains it" Our brokenness...[is] met by the grace of God who...graces and empowers us...to be his image bearers to and for the world."[2] I knew inside myself that He wanted me to be one of His image

2 James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan:Baker Academic,2009) Location 3075 of 5490.

bearers and He has empowered me to do so. In effect God has acted in my life (of course!) as a pastoral care-giver. He has provided healing in my time of need for as Emmanuel Lartey puts it "As human persons, we find ourselves broken and bruised in many ways. From time to time, we find ourselves in need of physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual restoration."[3] To be clear, I mean that God has healed me spiritually so that rather than falling into the darkness of guilt over my long term survival I turned to Him and He has led me to pursue the ministry he is choosing for me. After all, I was no better or worse than anyone I loved and knew who died because of HIV infection. Knowing this, I feel I have an obligation to fulfill God's mission for me.

Reflection on Attentive Presence

One of God's gifts to me throughout my life has been my ability as a pastoral care-giver. As I continue my discernment I am drawn to chaplaincy. When I speak with someone, whether I'm in a pastoral care-giver role or not, I am interested in what they are saying utilizing what John Savage calls "in-depth listening skills,"[4] because what they are saying is important *to them*. Though I have the God given ability to listen at a deep level, I have also benefited from my training as a cultural anthropologist in asking questions that get at the speaker's deeply held beliefs and feelings. This line of questioning is meant to uncover the significance of what the speaker is telling me. In light of my training on the complexity of context, I listen to what linguists call a speaker's idiolect (their particular speech habits) and specifically to that person's emotional and spiritual idiolect. As Lartey applies idiolect to "capture the complexity involved in the interactions between people who have been and are being shaped and influenced by different cultures,"[5] I apply it to deciphering the individual's own "web of meanings." This web is rooted in the complex context in which the individual grew up and now lives, or what Lartey describes as "[the] enigmatic composites of various strands of ethnicity, race, geography, culture and socio-economic setting."[6] I believe the cared-seeker's feelings are as culturally influenced as his or her beliefs, so I must be sensitive to that nuance. If,

3 Emmanuel Lartey, *In Living Color:An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral pastoral care and Counseling* (London and New York:Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003) Location 637 of 2140.
4 John Savage, *Listening and Caring Skills a Guide for Groups and Leaders* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996) Location 18 of 149.
5 Lartey, *In Living Color,* Location 268 of 2140.
6 Ibid., 69 of 2140.

for example, my client is Italian American and is talking about what it was like to share family meals and what might be missing now, I must be able to understand how deeply the sharing of a meal reflects an experience of loving and being loved for that person. It also adds to the depth of my presence with that person.

My experience as a gay man with HIV also helps me to empathize with the vulnerability of my client since "for pastoral pastoral care to be real it has to arise in the midst of genuine human encounter where pastoral care and pastoral cared for are both vulnerable and open."[7] I believe that if I had been a white Protestant man and not a gay HIV positive one, I might not have been so inclined to acknowledge my own vulnerability and to be open about it so I am grateful for that gift from God.

Additionally I am also aware of how my personal history could contribute to my "checking out" of a particular conversation in which I am participating as a pastoral caregiver. depending on how I react to the social status of my client. It is harder for me to empathize with people who have greater power so if my client person is a rich, healthy white man I could feel a lack of empathy for the concern he has come to me to address. In such a situation, I could lose my focus on the speaker who would then sense my lack of presence. I could fall into the trap of seeming to listen rather than demonstrating all the cues (my eyes being focused on my speaker, my body leaning forward and/or asking questions for clarification) that are involved in active listening. Another trap I could fall into is having my tone of voice conveying some sense of negative judgment of the client I am there to help. Therefore, in any further training I pursue, particularly as I am planning to pursue CPE, part of my self-examination and part of the feedback I would seek from my supervisor and my peers is whether and or how any bias I have against the privileged leaks out and how I could prevent that from happening.

Conclusion

The central metaphor in my developing theology of pastoral care is that I am broken in the way we all are, as was Jesus on the Cross,

7 Emmanuel Lartey, "The Fernley Hartley Lecture Pastoral pastoral care in Multi-cultural Britain :White, black, or beige?" *Epworth Review* 25, no. 3 (1998) :49.

and in providing pastoral care I call upon that brokenness to address those for whom I am a pastoral care provider and help them experience healing as a way to wholeness. That healing only comes from God, through me but not from me. I can draw upon the vulnerability I have felt as a marginalized person to empathize with the vulnerability of those to and for whom I provide pastoral care and that too is a gift from God. In my emergent theology of pastoral care I see healing as the essence of any of the various functions of pastoral pastoral care whether we label them as healing, sustaining,guiding, reconciling, liberating or empowering. God grants us as pastoral caregivers the privilege to be the instruments of His healing power in His creation. We must use it wisely.

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The Ethics of Remembering

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Abstract

Christians remember theologically imaginative believers and their ethical actions. Our responsibility is not to condemn or give a free pass, but to charitably continue their quest toward Jesus Christ, the One who remembered to look at and love all of us. This essay considers the ethical stances of Christians featured in Dr. Heather Vacek's American Religious Biography course (Fall 2015). It also draws from Robin W. Lovin's framework of Christian ethics featured in Dr. Ron Cole-Turner's Introduction to Ethics course (Fall 2015). Hopefully, readers will continue to remember these believers by consulting the biographies listed in the bibliography.

Matthew 19:16-21 and Mark 10:17-31 (NRSV) remember the encounter between humanity's best and divine perfection, through the rich young man's encounter with Jesus Christ. The rich young man is the picture of success in his culture. He does all the right things. He eagerly runs after Jesus Christ. He reverently kneels before Jesus. He perceptively calls Jesus "Good Teacher." He sincerely asks the right question, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus instructs him to obey the commandments, and he has done this since his youth! In Mark 10:21, Jesus *looks at him and he loves him.* Christ responds to what the rich young man offered, even though one more thing was needed. In Matthew 19:21, Christ calls to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." The picture of human success and morality walks away, *grieving*! In Mark 10:27, Christ explains to the astonished disciples about the difficulty for mortals to get into heaven, but reveals that with God, "all things are possible."

What if the rich young man decided not to walk away from Christ? What if he discovered space to follow Christ in some imperfect, yet definitive way? This essay explores those questions by remembering

how others chose to follow Christ. The actions which happen in the space between walking away from Christ and selling all possessions to the poor can be called Christian ethics. Robin W. Lovin defined this concept as a "stance." This is "an approach to moral problems that begins from a set of beliefs that are generally shared among Christians, including beliefs about God and about how God's presence in Jesus of Nazareth reshapes human lives and indicates the direction of human history."[1]In this way, history is actually put to work through a communion with theologically imaginative believers.

The phrase "theologically imaginative" describes individuals who lived out a vision of life and ministry rooted in the purpose and significance they found in God, often despite their historical contexts. The details for following God were not spelled out in concrete measures to follow. So, they had to operate in new ways. They brought theoretical theological ideas into reality. Robert K. Johnston provides a helpful characterization of this creative Christian thinking, which is "humble enough for its multiple sources to correct previous but faulty judgments . . . faithful enough to trust Scripture to have the final word."[2] *Thus, studying the ethical stances of theologically imaginative Christians within American history provides a background of interpretation for modern ethical decisions, calls Christians to take responsibility for their interpretations, and helps modern Christians make choices in a society that only offers imperfect options.*

Studying modern American Christian ethics involves remembering the choices of popular and overlooked figures. Margaret Bendroth wrote, "Christian remembering is not a set of duties or list of skills to master — it is an intention, one that begins with the simple grace of noticing."[3] Jimmy Carter is a popular figure in American history. However, Christian remembering equally sees others who are traditionally overlooked, such as Sarah Osborn, Francis Asbury, Rebecca Protten, Richard Allen, Aimee Semple McPherson, and Pauli Murray. Looking at, and even loving, each person in this space between walking away from Jesus and following Him contributes to Bendroth's notion of Christian remembering and Lovin's notion of Christian ethics.

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1 Robin W. Lovin, *An Introduction to Christian Ethics: Goals, Duties, and Virtues* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011), viii.
2 Robert K. Johnston, *The Christian at Play* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983), 5.
3 Margaret Bendroth, *The Spiritual Practice of Remembering* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2013), 128.

Lovin said that a Christian stance explains reality through the themes of creation, sin, incarnation, redemption and resurrection destiny.[4] There are four stances. Synergy "emphasizes the connections between Christian faith and other understandings of human good and seeks ways to work together with them."[5] Aimee Semple McPherson and Jimmy Carter fit here. Integrity "focuses on the differences that separate Christians from the goals and values of the world around them and seeks to maintain a distinctive Christian way of life,"[6] much like Francis Asbury and Rebecca Protten's life and ministry. Realism "warns Christians against overestimating their own power and virtue."[7] Sarah Osborn did this. Liberation "stresses that Christian faith frees people from the political, economic, and psychological power of those who oppress them."[8] Pauli Murray and Richard Allen would agree. To be sure, each individual fits into more than the one stance assigned to them, but these limits were set for the sake of this essay's clarity and length. Remembering these figures produces a framework of ethical action.

Remembering the Synergists provides lessons about how to make Christian choices amidst other perspectives. The early twentieth-century Pentecostal evangelist Sister Aimee understood herself as a woman responding to God's call on her life, which was largely based on the Social Gospel. Her actions often outpaced the popular secular and ecclesial expectations of a woman in the early twentieth century. Despite those potential limitations, she strove to humanize Jesus, "making him come to life as a real person who earnestly sought a relationship with every human being," and present Christianity "in simple, clear terms, in such a way as to make it almost impossible to reject."[9] She used the arenas of mass media, politics and culture to convey "old time religion" with captivating clarity.

McPherson's persuasive presentation revitalized evangelical Christianity. It also built bridges to other denominations and organizations by addressing their spiritual and physical needs. Within her church, she included every Christian denomination.[10] Outside, she had a wide discourse with groups such as the Salvation Army and the

4 Lovin, 26-27.
5 Ibid., 49.
6 Ibid., 54.
7 Ibid., 46.
8 Ibid., 63.
9 Matthew Avery Sutton, *Aimee Semple McPherson and the Resurrection of Christian America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 20.
10 Ibid., 46.

Ku Klux Klan, and individuals such as Charlie Chaplin, Jack Johnson, and Mahatma Gandhi. Unlike many pastors in her time, she endorsed political candidates and measures. The Angelus Temple attracted African-Americans, Asians, and Hispanics. Matthew Sutton described how these alliances contributed to McPherson's ministries taking the lead in relief efforts during the St. Francis Dam collapse, the Great Depression and other community crises. They "fed poor families, rendered first aid, sewed blankets and clothes, cared for deserted and expectant mothers, and helped out-of-work men and women, including recent parolees, find employment."[11] McPherson showed Christians how to use clear language and actions to say that God can work with anyone, and that God works for everyone's good.

Sister Aimee's "Social Gospel" was President Carter's "progressive evangelicalism." A lifelong Baptist, he responded to God's call to "bypass the big shots... and to make a concerted effort to understand people who are poor, black, speak a foreign language, who are not well educated, who are inarticulate, who are timid, who have some monumental problem."[12] Despite the prejudices against minorities that surrounded him in the American South of the early twentieth century, Carter formed deep relationships with African-American families as a young man. Carter responded to God's call by combining his Christian identity with his roles outside of the church. As the governor of Georgia, he told his audience, "I am a peanut farmer and a Christian... I am a business man and a Christian. I am a politician and a Christian."[13]

Carter's political and post-political career was the tale of a self-identified Christian Realist necessarily working as a Synergist. As President, Carter embraced Reinhold Niebuhr's notion to establish justice and fairness in a sinful world. The Christian ideals he taught about in his Sunday School classes were accomplished in his administration's stand for global human rights, domestic achievements furthering gender and racial equality, and environmental goals. He tried to fulfill his Christian duty by working with other legislators to produce laws that were imperfect, but still represented "a striving for justice and fairness."[14] Carter maintained this prophetic commitment to "the least of these," even though it seemed to hinder his response to

11 Ibid., 188-189.
12 Randall Balmer, *Redeemer: The Life of Jimmy Carter* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 62.
13 Ibid., 39.
14 Ibid., 20.

the Iran hostage and U.S. Energy crises. Despite his failed reelection bid in 1980, he founded the Carter Center and eventually won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002. Here he said, "I am convinced that Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, and others can embrace each other in a common effort to alleviate human suffering and to espouse peace."[15] In a culture that held deep-seated prejudices, passed flawed laws and rejected progressive evangelicalism, Jimmy Carter built alliances and relationships with different groups to do God's work in an imperfect world.

As Synergists, Sister Aimee and President Carter attracted and effectively cooperated with diverse groups. However, Jimmy Carter revealed the Synergist tendency to sacrifice the unhindered power of the Christian prophetic voice for a wider cultural or political influence based on consensus.[16] Similarly, Sister Aimee tended to idealize America in the image of those included in her consensus, and demonized those who embraced communism or evolution as "antichrists." Sutton described how during World War II, McPherson "embraced the 'total' war strategy of the United States and overlooked the injustices being done to Japanese Americans, many of whom were fellow Christians."[17] These Synergists showed Christians how to clearly share their faith in a pluralistic society and build alliances with people outside of the church. However, they also reveal the need for Christians to be reminded that they are distinct from the rest of the world.

Remembering the Integrists shows Christians how to maintain the church's identity. The early American Methodist leader Francis Asbury would appreciate the Synergists' use of popular culture and inclusion of outsiders, but he felt called to build and prioritize God's community. John Wigger wrote that "Methodism had given him a sense of himself that went beyond his upbringing as a gardener's son and metalworker's apprentice. His life was testimony to... its ability to instill a profound sense of significance in the lives of believers ."[18] This sense of purpose drove Asbury to build Methodism in colonial America. Since there was no instruction manual for starting this community in a new land, Asbury innovatively built it as a disciplined

15 Ibid., 179.
16 Balmer, 182.
17 Sutton, 263.
18 John Wigger, *American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 55.

circuit rider, a preacher of piety, a middleman between clergy and congregation and a brilliant administrator. Wigger wrote, "As Asbury crisscrossed the nation year in and year out, he attended to countless administrative details. Yet he never lost sight of the people involved... the system Asbury crafted made it possible to keep tabs on thousands of preachers and lay workers."[19] Asbury found the meaning of Christian life in his American Methodist community.

Asbury demonstrated his convictions about the Christian community during the Revolutionary War. As he watched other Methodist preachers openly support the British cause and flee from America, Francis was concerned with preserving the American Methodist community. He decided to continue preaching in America, despite the safety and advantages offered by returning to England. He decided to put the situation in God's hands, rather than address it himself. He concluded that "all temporal concerns, particularly with regard to politics, were ultimately a distraction from a higher calling. What difference did it make which government people lived under if, in the end, they landed in hell?"[20] Francis Asbury showed Christians how to prioritize matters of salvation over matters of the surrounding culture.

Rebecca Protten also prioritized her Christian mission over cultural concerns. She felt called by Christ to "take up his cross with all [her] heart," and "preach among enslaved plantation workers and form a new black Christian community in America."[21] As a mixed-race slave, and then freed slave, on the island of St. Thomas in the early eighteenth century, Rebecca was probably defined as property, an inferior gender, and an outsider of God's community. Despite this context, Christianity enabled Rebecca to take steps to define her own identity and her own picture of the faith, based on the purpose and significance she found in responding to God's call. The Sermon on the Mount described a Christian community that served as a guiding force in her life at times where she was required to make tough decisions. At one point in her life, she faced imprisonment, banishment from the Reformed Church and a heavy fine for participating in a marriage and baptism that was deemed unlawful by a state judge. Here she held to "the self-perception as a New Testament people on God's errand,"

19 Ibid., 8.
20 Ibid., 97.
21 Jon F. Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 64.

and she believed that "enduring the test would demonstrate their own worthiness to serve God's cause."[22] That sense of purpose kept Protten dedicated to her ministry as she travelled to Europe, and through the sicknesses and struggles of her husbands. She found her significance in her African Christian community.

Rebecca Protten valued the formation of a black Christian community over her African culture. Jon Sensbach described how Protten believed "Christianity promised spiritual freedom for people of color; any deviation revealed lingering heathenism and might jeopardize the mission itself. In that time and place... insensitivity to African values was not the issue—these values had to be subordinated to the survival of a divine project." Even though Protten may have insisted upon Christianity to the detriment of African culture, she gave her community a starting point towards forming their own Christian identity and responding to a difficult world.

Integrists Francis Asbury and Rebecca Protten created and maintained a distinct Christian community against the odds. However, both tended to render their Christian community as ineffective or not responsible for addressing the surrounding society, perhaps, to the detriment of their marginalized members. Asbury demonstrated the Integrist tendency to overlook the sins of the Christian community to maintain their unity and mission. Asbury let southern Methodists hold slaves because, "his theology demanded that the eternal fate of souls take precedence over social justice, but slavery was still a moral tragedy, and he knew it."[23] rotten exhibited the Integrist tendency of dismissing the experience of the marginalized in the name of Christianity. Sensbach wrote about how she insisted upon identifying with the faith of white missionaries while shunning African music, dancing festivals and holidays, as she "might even be labeled complicit in a campaign of cultural eradication."[24] These Integrists show how to build and prioritize Christian identity within an imperfect culture. They also reveal the need for Christians to be challenged not to dismiss the problems of the world and the suffering of the marginalized in order to find a self-serving haven within the literal and geopolitical walls of the church.

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22 Ibid., 115.
23 Wigger, 155.
24 Sensbach, 89.

Remembering the Realist helps the Christian community interpret suffering in terms of worldly experience and God's love. The eighteenth-century Congregationalist Sarah Osborn would not prioritize God's plan for the community over His plan for the salvation and suffering of individuals. Osborn felt called to love God as Jesus commanded. She sought to share the life of Christ by being "dependent on his divine grace... to show other Christians how to accept their afflictions without 'murmuring.'"[25] Her Christian identity was centered on the assurance of salvation and making sense of sin and hardships through God's love, purpose and presence in redemptive suffering. She was born into a colonial community where women were expected to be subordinate to men, inherently sinful and overlooked. Her parents raised her to obey God without complaint, which caused her to internalize her feelings of being "worthless and ashamed, utterly forsaken by both humanity and God."[26] In this context, Sarah Osborn's conversion narrative centered upon God's love for her, rather than the affirmation and authority of her community. Catherine Brekus describes how Sarah saw Jesus as a lover, in whom she could share His life through obedience, service and suffering.[27] Brekus writes, "If she could let herself believe that God loved her, then her moments of despair would be tempered by her confidence in God's love."[28] Sarah Osborn made sense of the seemingly meaningless realities of sin and hardships by seeing them in the biblical framework of God's love, purpose and presence. Brekus suggested that Sarah's idea is summarized in the key phrase, "kiss the rod." Sarah shows what this means in the midst of losing her only son while being unsure about his salvation or God's intent. Brekus explains Sarah's realization that "Samuel's death was a sign not that God had deserted her, but, on the contrary, that he loved her."[29] Since Sarah found comfort in Hebrews 12:6-11, she understood hardships as God's "corrections" for her eternal benefit, and said "O, his word comforted, his *rod* comforted me... I saw no frown in it: no, but the kind chastisement of my indulgent Father."[30] Sarah's loss was met by "God's boundless love... she had lost her child, yet she still had a 'Father' and 'Friend' who would never forsake her."[31]

25 Catherine A. Brekus, *Sarah Osborn's World: The Rise of Evangelical Christianity in Early America* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2013), 157.
26 Ibid., 65.
27 Ibid., 111-112.
28 Ibid., 95
29 Ibid., 153.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid., 152-153.

Osborn's reconciliation of suffering and confidence in God's love guided her decisions and perspective. She saw her suffering in poverty as meant for her heavenly benefit. When her son died, Sarah found evidence of God's love for her in a fallen world. The loss of her son drove her to share the way of salvation with everyone she interacted with as a teacher and experienced Christian. This theologically imaginative approach led her to maintain and create a Christian community rooted in the saving knowledge of Christ. This innovative community featured female leadership and fellowship with white, African, and Native American believers. Osborn's achievement was also notable, considering that her pastor could not continue his responsibilities due to a family loss of his own. Here Sarah reminded Christians to respond to their sinful world not with human effort alone, but with faith in their loving God.

Sarah Osborn demonstrated the Realist's timeless relevance as a reminder not to overestimate human power and virtue by overlooking the nature of sin or taking God's love for granted. On the other hand, Realists can fall victim to the thought that Christians cannot do anything to alleviate the experience of a sinful world. Sarah Osborn thought that the salvation of the soul should come before every matter of her time, particularly slavery. Brekus wrote, "Though she was willing to wage war against Satan himself in order to teach slaves about Jesus, she would not fight to free them."[32] While Osborn would eventually preach against slavery later in her life, she could only leave the actual work of freeing the slaves for others. Realists remind Christians that God's love through Jesus Christ is the standard to measure their achievements without overrating them. Unlike the Integrists who focus on the quality of Christian community, Realists focus on the quality of individual Christian lives. However, Realists should be careful not to emphasize the salvation of the soul to the extent that the suffering of the marginalized is excused as a natural experience of the fallen world.

Remembering the Liberationists can teach Christians how to reach out to "the least of these" and empower them in this imperfect world. Liberationists would not see suffering as redemptive by itself. Instead, they would see it as motivation to change the situation. In responding to God's call, Philadelphian and freed slave Richard Allen became a black founder who "built reform institutions to redeem African

32 Ibid., 265.

Americans, and... a broader moral leader who wanted to redeem the American republic from the sin of racial subjugation."[33] He was born into a world where figures like George Washington and Thomas Jefferson acquiesced to viewing African-Americans as slaves and intellectually inferior. Even though Allen was not granted access to American prosperity, he worked hard to secure his own freedom and financial security. Despite being born in a country that used Christian arguments to enslave him, Allen "got religion" with the help of his family and his community.[34] Allen's motto, "work hard, pray, and try to rise" characterized his life and served as a response to America's moral silence toward slavery and racial injustice.

Since America offered no answers for uplifting Allen's community, he found his own. After experiencing racial discrimination at St. George's Church, Allen led the black community in bringing his vision of a black church into reality. Richard Newman wrote, "To redeem African Americans, Allen realized that he would need more than his deep-felt Christian faith. He would need... to build an institution capable of galvanizing and protecting free blacks for the duration of their freedom struggle."[35] Allen also reflected the decisions and divisions of choosing between the options of black exodus from America or black redemption within the country. He concluded that "America was a black homeland and... African Americans had a vital role to play in redeeming the American republic."[36] During the Year of the Yellow Fever, he co-wrote a convincing rhetorical pamphlet to protest racial stereotyping in print. In these ways, Allen showed that Christians respond to the marginalized by seeing their experience, creating relationships of solidarity with them, and empowering them to transform the status quo.

Meanwhile, Pauli Murray saw herself as part of the "triple-oppressed" community who was called by God to work as an activist, lawyer, and priest for racial reconciliation. She did not fit into the dominant racial, sexual, and gender constructs of her time. Yet through her poems *Color Trouble* and *Mulatto's Dilemma*, she was able to recognize that "meaning is produced at the intersection of

33 Richard S. Newman, *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church, and the Black Founding Fathers* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 21.
34 Ibid., 40.
35 Ibid., 77.
36 Ibid., 18.

identities."[37] She wrote *Proud Shoes* to interpret her family history and concluded, "I had to embrace *all* the tangled roots from which I had sprung, and to accept without evasion my own slave heritage, with all its ambivalences and paradoxes."[38]

Murray insisted that the true American story was the story of the marginalized tangled up with the dominant community. In this way, Murray worked from the margins to confront the dominant narrative of an inclusive, assimilative America with the counter-narrative of exclusion and individual experience. Sarah Azaransky rendered Murray's theological vision as "democratic eschatology." This meant that America's democratic promises were not the actual reality for the marginalized. Rather, these promises were in a "process of becoming," so the marginalized could expect and demand them to happen.[39] As an Episcopal priest, she preached, "we cannot be whole human beings when we are alienated from our neighbors... Jesus treated each person as a unique individual, not on the basis of categories of race, sex, or social status, but on the basis of their common humanity."[40] In this way Pauli Murray taught Christians how to empower the powerless, and how to motivate the powerful to reach out to the oppressed.

The Liberationists created a meaningful moral life without approval from the guardians of tradition and order, but they tended to identify the experience of the marginalized too closely to Christianity. In *An Address to Those Who Keep Slaves*, Richard Allen insisted that God would destroy slaveholders, and he implied that slaveholding was a sin that sent them to hell.[41] Pauli Murray relied heavily on her personal experience and alienation to shape her theology. She embraced a view of Christ "progressively recognizing his Christhood" in a way that acknowledges Luke 2:52's testimony of Christ "increasing in wisdom and years," but places it too closely to her own journey.[42] Yet as Synergists equate the Christian life too closely to consensus, Integrists too closely to the church, and Realists too closely to personal salvation, it is important to see that each position working together portrays the full Christian stance, while one position only provides a partial picture.

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37 Sarah Azaransky, *The Dream Is Freedom: Pauli Murray and American Democratic Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 117.
38 Ibid., 47.
39 Ibid., 71.
40 Ibid., 112.
41 Newman, 124.
42 Azaransky, 105.

This essay travelled a long theological distance from the rich young man to Pauli Murray. The rich young man was a picture of his culture's success, yet he walked away from Christ, grieving. Pauli Murray embodies her own sermon, *Mary Has Chosen the Best Part*, where she said, "we can see Mary as an unusual woman, one who was unwilling to accept the role defined for her and was drawn to Jesus of Nazareth, because he treated her like a person with an intellect and a quest of knowledge for God."[43] This distinction between the one who walked away from Christ and the one who was drawn to Jesus is a good place to introduce the ethical framework of Christian remembering. Miguel A. De La Torre suggests that Christian ethics requires believers to interact with "the neighbor" in the fullness of their humanity and seeing their worth in God, as salvation is not equated with a social system or human agenda.[44] Both Christian remembering and Christian ethics involves seeing everyone's humanity.

The ethics of remembering first calls Christians to understand their role in society. Each figure in this essay chose to identify with the either dominant class or the oppressed. The rich young man identifies with the dominant class, while Jesus calls attention to the plight of the poor. Second, it involves determining the options our roles afford. The dominant culture figures in this essay "did ethics" by moving toward relationships of solidarity with those on the margins in varying degrees. The rich young man was not willing to sell all his possessions to the poor. He still had the option to contribute a portion of his riches for their sake, or even his concern and friendship. Meanwhile, the marginalized figures, in different ways, lovingly called the dominant culture to meet impossible demands. Lovin said that these demands are rightfully impossible, "because without them, we quickly become satisfied with whatever we are able to accomplish without much risk to our own security and self-interest."[45] This recalls Jesus loving the rich young man for obeying the law since youth, yet calling him to sell the all the goods that are so important to him. Third, it creates a distinctly Christian voice. Each figure in this essay had different sources of authority guiding their Christian life, but each made ethical actions based on biblical principals, reflective of their Christian communities. Christ invites the rich young man not just to do good, but to join his

43 Ibid., 102.
44 Miguel A. De La Torre, Doing Christian Ethics from the Margins: 2nd Edition Revised and Expanded (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2014), 34-36.
45 Lovin, 225.

disciples in following Him. Finally, it involves choosing the least imperfect action to express that voice. Each figure attempted to pursue their calling, despite the risk of violating the norms and expectations of an imperfect, prejudicial and unjust society.

Perhaps there is no "perfect path" to following Jesus. Perhaps there is only the risky, imperfect, theologically imaginative attempt to do so, because He invited us to follow Him in the first place. In this understanding, the rich young man actually demonstrates what Christian ethics is, by showing us what it is not. It is not walking away from Christ to affirm human success and strength. It is accepting Christ's invitation to see what is real about the world and our inadequacy, and still choosing to participate in the uncertain adventure of affirming God's love, purpose and dignity to those that society recognizes and overlooks. Christians are called to remember theologically imaginative believers and their ethical actions. Our responsibility to them is not to condemn or give a free pass, but to charitably continue their quest to follow after Jesus Christ, the One who remembered to look at and love all of us.

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"Written by the Finger of God Himself": Fossils and Faith in the Work of William Buckland

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When Christians and churches today seek to work out science / faith relations in ways that exhibit genuine pursuits of truth, they have an instructive resource available in the histories of those relations. Paleontology—even before it was called "paleontology"—has convinced scientists that the history of life on Earth has been rich, long, and complex. Relationships between fossils and Christian faith have been complex as well. This paper will explore the relationship between paleontology and biblical theology by examining the life and beliefs of William Buckland (1784-1856), an English geologist and Christian whose extensive work with fossils compelled him to incorporate fossils into his natural theology.

William Buckland was born to a family with land and means. His father served as an Anglican clergyman and had an amateur interest in fossils. It is no surprise, then, that as a child William spent time in nature and enjoyed organisms, both alive and fossil. He excelled at education and trained for ministry as an Anglican priest. During these years, Buckland developed acquaintances with people who were involved in geology. He began learning from practitioners and spending time in the field, visiting rock and fossil sites throughout England and the European continent. In 1813, he succeeded John Kidd as Oxford's reader in mineralogy. In 1818, he added to this an appointment as the first reader in geology at Oxford. Oxford would function as Buckland's home base for the bulk of his career, which included fieldwork in many countries, vivid lectures, modest publishing, and participation in scientific communities.[1]

1 "Buckland, William," in *The Biographical Dictionary of Scientists*, vol. 1, 3rd ed., Roy Porter and Marilyn Ogilvie, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 197-89; Walter F. Cannon, "Buckland, William," in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, vol. 2, Charles Coulston Gillispie, ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 566-72; and J. M. Edmonds and J. A. Douglas, "William Buckland, F.R.S. (1784-1856) and an Oxford Geological Lecture, 1823," *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 30, no. 2 (January 1979): 141-67.

As to the relation of Buckland's geology[2] to his theology, in 1819 he delivered a lecture, published in 1820 as *Vindiciae Geologicae*. In it, Buckland presented his case that geology assisted natural theology and confirmed the Genesis flood.[3] Both of these emphases would occupy him for years. His natural theology will be discussed more fully below, but for now, it is helpful to bear in mind that his tradition (Anglican) would define in part the God he found more fully revealed in nature. And, given the role of the Bible in Anglican theology, Buckland's Anglican natural theology would be seen to enhance his Anglican biblical theology.

The relation of his geology to his biblical theology is apparent in his concern to harmonize the Genesis flood with geologic evidence of a recent catastrophe: recent fossils, surface gravels and rocks, and valley erosion trends. These features were widely understood by geologists to indicate a recent catastrophe. In this, Buckland was not alone. He lost some of his company, however, in his concern to identify that catastrophe with the flood described in the Bible, as unique and distinct from other ancient flood stories. Despite their disagreements, other naturalists seemed unable to supply a better explanation for the sets of data of which Buckland was trying to make sense. Thus, he pressed on in his researches.

Additional fieldwork, especially his prize-winning work with fossils in caves, supplied Buckland with material for another book, *Reliquiae Diluvianae* (1823). He believed that his ongoing research continued to turn up "diluvian relics." Now, it would misrepresent Buckland to say that his biblical theology blinded his science. For one, he had already abandoned a young earth as completely incompatible with geologic evidence, even coming under fire from the young-earth proponents of the day, the "scriptural geologists."[4] Unlike the scriptural geologists, Buckland actively worked in the field, presented his work to other specialists, and stayed current on their fieldwork. It is true that Buckland also harmonized the creation story of Genesis 1 with geology—the gap interpretation was the only one that could harmonize with the data—but his harmony reflected a mature grasp of the science of the day.

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2 Buckland used "geology" in a way that included the study of fossils, paleontology.
3 Edmonds and Douglas, "William Buckland," 144.
4 Martin J. S. Rudwick, *Worlds before Adam: The Reconstruction of Geohistory in the Age of Reform* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 424-25.

A second proof that Buckland's biblical theology did not blind his science is his later change of mind. Criticisms of his diluvial theory prompted him, as well as others, to explore the fossils, rock strata, surface pebbles, erratic blocks, and valley erosions more thoroughly. It became clearer that a single flood could not account for all of the data. This change of mind occurred throughout the 1820s and '30s, and Buckland noted this change in his Bridgewater Treatise (1836).[5] In addition, a colleague, Louis Agassiz, proposed a glacial theory as a more adequate explanation for the erratic blocks, other surface rocks, some valley erosions, and various surface scour marks. Buckland found the theory compelling and, in the 1840s, assisted Agassiz in his research and publicizing.[6] As a result, he allowed science to change his mind about the biblical flood text, and he allowed science to supply more adequate explanations.

Perhaps in no single place is the relation of Buckland's Geology to his theology more evident than in his Bridgewater Treatise, *Geology and Mineralogy Considered with Reference to Natural Theology*. This treatise and its counterparts were designed, as it were, to extend the natural theology of William Paley into other fields of inquiry. (One could refer to Buckland's focus as Paleontology.) In the first volume, Buckland devoted the vast majority of his attention to "proofs of design" in numerous classes of fossil species. Just as Paley had employed anatomy to demonstrate adaptive design, so also Buckland analyzed the anatomy of fossil organisms to reconstruct their way of life, and thereby demonstrate their adaptive design. The second volume supplied the visual material referenced in the first volume: a fold-out stratigraphic drawing, and more than 60 other plates, most of them drawings of fossil specimens.

In his treatise, Buckland described his (and his colleagues') geology as the act of discovering and reading a book: "we are enabled to extract from the *archives* of the interior of the earth, intelligible *records* of former conditions of our planet, and to decipher *documents*, which were a *sealed book* to all our predecessors . . . ."[7] Thus, Buckland regarded his science with excitement and a sense of privilege: he lived in the right time and place to participate in exciting geologic discoveries. In addition to the sheer joy of discovering things

5 William Buckland, *Geology and Mineralogy Considered with Reference to Natural Theology*, vol. 1 (1836, reprint, London: Forgotten Books, 2012), 94n.
6 Rudwick, *Worlds*, 517-33.
7 Buckland, *Geology*, 7, emphasis added.

that people had not known, Buckland believed that the book he and his colleagues were discovering and reading was *God's* book, "records of the operations of the Almighty Author of the Universe, *written by the finger of God himself*, upon the foundations of the everlasting hills."[8] The expression calls to mind the tablets of stone (!), also "written with the finger of God" (Ex 31:18). It seems that Buckland saw revealed theology and natural theology in a parallel way, even if, in his view, the Bible was more concerned with "religious belief" and "moral conduct" than science.[9]

The main reason Buckland was able to read God's book was that the rocks and fossils displayed enough patterns in their features to suggest order, law-like processes, and, to him, design. These patterns were as true for the processes that produced volcanoes as they were for the more (apparently) tranquil processes that seemed to predominate Earth history. Both kinds of processes had shaped Earth's surface to render it increasingly suitable for greater varieties of life forms.[10] It is worth noting here that Buckland considered design in nature and specific theories about nature as two distinct issues to be worked out, at least in the case of how various lands had been formed: "The evidence of design in the employment of forces, which have thus effected a grand general purpose, viz. that of forming dry land . . . *stands independent of the truth or error of contending theories*, respecting the origin of that most ancient class of stratified rocks . . . ."[11] This is worth noting because, as subsequent thinkers assess the relation of Buckland's natural theology to his work in geology, his words suggest that, for him, scientific theories can change without necessary harm to the ability to see design in nature.

Not only did Buckland perceive design as independent of theory, but his conclusions about design—which may well have been presuppositions—were made in the midst of serious attention to what he knew about rocks and fossils. In other words, his appeal to design was not a God-of-the-gaps appeal, invoked to fill a gap in his knowledge. His use of causal language—"secondary" causes, "first" and "final" causes—reflects his attempt to describe God as causally involved in nature, which in turn has its own proximate causes, available to scientific detection and prediction. In short, God can

8 Ibid., 7-8, emphasis added.
9 Ibid., 15.
10 Ibid., 34-96.
11 Ibid., 43, emphasis added.

cause nature to cause its own processes. The one repeated occasion in which he seems to appeal exclusively to direct divine causality is in the case of origins, especially the origin of life and the origin of new species.[12] Ascribing new species to God's direct action was not a cop-out, however. The fossil record, with which Buckland was quite familiar, bore witness to the abrupt appearance of species, leaving contemporary theories of transmutation devoid of much, if any, evidential basis at all.

As mentioned above, Buckland spent a substantial amount of space in his treatise on all major classes of fossil species, describing their anatomies, reconstructing their ways of life, and admiring their adaptations. At the risk of boredom, but to appreciate the detailed geology on which Buckland reflected theologically, consider the chapters that dominate the treatise:

> Proofs of Design in the Structure of Fossil Vertebrated Animals
>
> Proofs of Design in the Fossil Remains of Mollusks
>
> Proofs of Design in the Structure of Fossil Articulated Animals
>
> Proofs of Design in the Structure of Fossil Radiated Animals, or Zoophytes
>
> Proofs of Design in the Structure of Fossil Vegetables
>
> Proofs of Design in the Dispositions of Strata of the Carboniferous Order
>
> Proofs of Design in the Effect of Disturbing Forces on the Strata of the Earth
>
> Advantageous Effect of Disturbing Forces in giving Origin to Mineral Veins
>
> Adaptations of the Earth to afford Supplies of Water through the Medium of Springs
>
> Proofs of Design in the Structure and Composition of Unorganized Mineral Bodies.

These chapters, which span more than 400 pages, are mostly anatomical descriptions, but culminate invariably in reflections on the design that Buckland sees in each case, and for which he credits his God, the one and same God of Christian theology and the Christian Bible.

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12 E.g., ibid., 53-56.

Buckland's chapter on fossil vertebrates will provide a specific example of his work in the treatise. His strategy in that chapter was to follow the successions of dominant vertebrate species backward through history as evidenced by their fossil records: mammals in the more recent Tertiary period, reptiles in the older Secondary period, and fish in the still older portions of the Secondary period. For each period, he took joy in describing some of the most unusual specimens—that is, those that were quite unlike living species. In his section on mammals, he described Dinotherium and Megatherium. His section on Megatherium concluded as follows:

His entire frame was an apparatus of colossal mechanism, adapted exactly to the work it had to do; strong and ponderous, in proportion as this work was heavy, and calculated to be the vehicle of life and enjoyment to a gigantic race of quadrupeds; which, though they have ceased to be counted among the living inhabitants of our planet, have, in their fossil bones, left behind them imperishable monuments of the consummate skill with which they were constructed. Each limb, and fragment of a limb, forming co-ordinate parts of a well adjusted and perfect whole; and through all their deviations from the form and proportion of the limbs of other quadrupeds, affording fresh proofs of the infinitely varied, and inexhaustible contrivances of Creative Wisdom.[13]

There is much available here for scientific reflection, to be sure: the accuracy and durability of Buckland's analysis and reconstruction, or Buckland's understanding of "species" as evidenced by his use of the language of "co-ordinate parts." Even if it is a scientifically accurate account of its time, the extent to which a reconstructed organism furnishes proof of God's wisdom is a matter for theological reflection. The nuances of Buckland's natural theology, then, sit within a larger, ongoing conversation about the use(fulness) of natural theology.[14]

Rather than chase these lines of thought, and since the present paper is interested in biblical theology, it is all the more interesting what Buckland had to say about Megatherium in the sentences immediately preceding the excerpt above. Reflecting on

13 Ibid., 164.

14 Adam R. Shapiro, "Darwin's Foil: The Evolving Uses of William Paley's *Natural Theology* 1802-2005," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 45 (March 2014): 114-23.

Megatherium's size, movements, and outer protection, he said:

> Thus heavily constructed, and ponderously accoutred, it could neither run, nor leap, nor climb, nor burrow under the ground, and in all its movements must have been necessarily slow; but what need of rapid locomotion to an animal, whose occupation of digging roots for food was almost stationary? and what need of speed for flight from foes, to a creature whose carcase was encased in an impenetrable cuirass, and who by a single pat of his paw, or lash of his tail, could in an instant have demolished the Cougar or the Crocodile? Secure within the panoply of his bony armour, where was the enemy that would dare encounter *this Leviathan of the Pampas*? or, in what more powerful creature can we find the cause that has effected the extirpation of his race?[15]

Even without the reference to Leviathan, Buckland's description of this Tertiary monster sounds like a description that belongs in the divine speech of Job 38-41, especially if God had chosen to use fossil species. In addition, it seems that Buckland's description of Megatherium functioned in a way not unlike the divine speech: Buckland found himself with complexified and enriched perspectives on the character of God, God's world, and humans within that world. Thus it would seem that Job 38-41 and Buckland's treatise pursue parallel ways of seeing nature.

That parallel may not be accidental. It is interesting that Buckland, in describing a fossil monster, thought to describe it with reference to a biblical monster. Perhaps the relation of the Bible to science was for Buckland much more dynamic than proving or discrediting biblical stories. Perhaps years of studying the Bible had saturated his thinking so that he could see his fossils through biblical images. And perhaps this capacity of the Bible to provide rich imagery with which to see the world was one reason Buckland considered the Bible inspired, even if creation and flood stories seemed less and less like eyewitness historical records. More research would be required to determine whether Buckland alluded to biblical images frequently enough to be consonant with these ponderings. What *is* clear is that Buckland considered his scientific work a sacred calling with sacred results. Whatever the merits that natural theology may or may not have to later thinkers, it is difficult to see how someone like Buckland

15 Buckland, 163-64, emphasis added.

could have been expected to carry out his work without seeing God in relation to it. Perhaps some of the hang-ups with natural theology have more to do with arguing over the content of specific attempts at it, rather than reflecting more on what the process itself entails for its practitioners. There is only one reality, and even if there are distinct tools for studying it, someone who accepts the validity of theological tools cannot possibly keep from using them when scientific tools so effectively reveal more of that reality to a theological thinker. One can of course debate whether Buckland "proved" God to himself or to others through his analysis of fossils. What one cannot deny is that Buckland's firsthand work with fossils enhanced his view of God.

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Sermons

PITTSBURGH
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2016

To Equip the Saints for the Work of Ministry

Rebecca DePoe

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Ephesians 4:1-16

This sermon was preached at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Chapel, January 27, 2016.

When I was 10, I was a proud member of “All Stars for Jesus”, my church’s kids choir. That year, our head pastor asked if the All Stars for Jesus would be up for singing during the Easter worship service. I was pretty excited to sing during this service, because the whole congregation would see me in my sparkly new Easter dress. For the service, we sang the beloved children’s choir classic “Lord I Lift Your Name On High”.

If you attended any mainline Protestant worship service in the late 90’s, you know this song. In fact you probably also know some hand motions to go with it. In case you have never heard this song, I’m going to sing it. Feel free to join in with me:

You came from heaven to Earth

To show the way

From the Earth to the Cross

My Debt to Pay

From the Cross to the Grave

From the Grave to the Sky

Lord I lift your name on high.

Since graduating from “All Stars for Jesus”, I hadn’t thought about this song. That is, until Term 2 last year, when it came time for me to take my Christology final. Dr. van Driel handed us the lyrics to this song, and asked us to explain to him what was wrong with it theologically. What was wrong with it?! How could there be anything wrong with it? Didn’t he know that I sang this song (with hand motions, no less) in my sparkly Easter dress 15 years ago?

I was not the only one outraged by this question on our Christology final. Very quickly my class divided in two teams. Those who agreed that there was something theologically wrong with this song were labeled snobs. And those who didn’t were labeled stupid.

Every lunchtime conversation for the entire month of February centered around what team you were on, Team Snob or Team Stupid. Once you found your teammates, you weren't allowed to fraternize with the other team or vice-versa.

My classmates and I were allowing Christology to became a huge source of disunity in our class. And I think that this is the type of disunity the writer Ephesians is exhorting against. The author of this letter urges the Ephesians to seek the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Interestingly, nowhere in this book does the writer argue that unity in the Spirit in the bond of peace means that everyone agrees with everyone about everything. However, neither does unity mean thinking that people who disagree with you are snobs. No, the type of unity the writer wants the church to strive for is theological, even confessional:

> *There is one body and one Spirit-just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call-one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

One Lord. One faith. One baptism. This is the source of our unity, and the one thing that all Christians can agree on. One Lord: Jesus Christ. One faith in Jesus Christ: by the power of the Holy Spirit. One baptism: in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit. Sure, we Christians have many disagreements over what it means to confess one Lord, one faith, one baptism, but this confession is the source of our unity in the church.

When I look back at our Christology final, I realize that my classmates and I weren't having a disagreement about confessing Jesus Christ as Lord. We were having a disagreement about how we confess Jesus Christ as Lord. When you look at the lyrics of "Lord I Lift Your Name on High", you will see that it teaches penal substitution. What Jesus did on the cross was take on our punishment for sin so that we could be reconciled to God. This is what John Calvin, a brilliant theologian, and many reformed churches believe that Jesus did on the cross.

However, as I was studying for my Christology final, I realized that Calvin's atonement model may overemphasize the power of sin, and underestimate the power of the resurrection. I realized that my understanding of what Jesus did on the cross was not

as straightforward as I thought it was when I stood in front of my congregation in my sparkly Easter dress.

When I turned in my final exam, I realized how childish the whole "teams" situation was becoming. By perpetuating this false dichotomy, I was refusing, like Bonhoeffer before he came to America in the 1930s, to make the turn from phraseology to reality. In other words, I was not making the transition from the really rich theology I had learned in the classroom to the practice of eating lunch with the classmates with whom I disagreed. In a strange way, I was allowing myself to be tossed back and forth, blown about by every wind of doctrine. I had allowed my quest for the ever-elusive perfect atonement model to blind me from loving my peers and growing up into Christ who is the head.

Here at the seminary we think a lot about what it means to equip the saints for the work of ministry. Everything from the learning outcomes in our syllabi, to our mission statement, to how we arrange our worship space in chapel, is done with the goal of equipping students to serve the church in some way. When I look back at my time here at PTS, I can think of two ways that the seminary strives to equip us for the work of ministry. The first way I immediately embraced. The second took a few years to sink in.

This seminary does an outstanding job in preparing people to confess the faith. From TH01 through TH91, my professors have taught me that before I can lead a congregation in the Apostles' Creed, I have to know what it means to confess "one Lord, one faith, one Baptism." In my Reformed tradition, this means that I had to read Calvin. And Barth. And Torrance. Yes, this means that I spend a lot of time hanging out with dead white guys. But these dead white guys have dedicated their lives to trying to say something faithful about what it means to confess "one Lord, one faith, one Baptism." And as such, they're worth spending some time with.

However, my Christology final is just one example of our seminary's struggle to live out Christian unity in a theologically diverse community. Our Scripture passage ends with a plea to do just that.

> *But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each*

part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

The body doesn't work as well when one part is fighting with another part, because such fighting distracts and even prevents the body from doing what it was created to do: live in unity as a body. Yet the body also doesn't work as well when instead of fighting, we avoid the people with whom we disagree. Avoiding the people with whom we disagree makes it impossible for us to build the Christ-centered relationships that form the bedrock of every Christian community. Part of maturing in Christian faith is realizing that the body of Christ is messy, and diverse, and beautiful. We really limit the way God can act through us in the world if we only ever eat lunch with fellow Presbyterian students.

I want to close by saying that I'm really grateful for my Christology final. I'm grateful for the opportunity to recognize how I was behaving like a child. I am grateful for the opportunity to mature in the faith by growing in the understanding of who God is and how God acts in the world. But I am most grateful to have learned that we worship a God who is more than up to the task of dwelling with a theologically diverse community striving for Christian unity; a God who takes our theological questions and uses them to unite the saints for the work of ministry.

Amen.

Fierceness and Determination

Diane Flynn

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Mark 7:24-30
(The Syrophoenician Woman)

This sermon was preached at Center Presbyterian Church, September 6, 2015.

Nothing can compare to the fierceness and determination of a mother's love for her child. She will do almost anything to make sure her child is happy and healthy. Our culture has even coined a new phrase for today's overprotective mom. She's called a "helicopter parent." But as parents, whether we like to admit it or not, there is only so much we can do for our children. Even if God has not blessed you with children, there is only so much you can do on your own. At some point in time, our faith and belief in the power of someone or something higher than ourselves is what gets us through the tough times. For Christians, our faith is found in the saving love of the Jesus.

At the time of our scripture lesson for today, the word of Jesus' teaching and miracles had begun to spread. The people of Israel knew that God had promised to send them a savior. A Messiah that the prophet Isaiah said would be one of their own people. In Isaiah 9, the promise of God was this: He would send them his son. Someone who would take over the running of the world. He would be called such things as Mighty Counselor, Everlasting God, and Prince of Peace. His ruling authority would grow, and there would be no limit to the peace and wholeness he would bring. As a descendent from David he would rule over the promised kingdom, maintain its firm footing and keep it going. He would be a fair ruler, live a righteous life, and his kingdom would last from now through eternity.

God's covenant promise was a tall order. It took several hundred years from the time of Isaiah's prophecy, but by now, word had spread that it actually was coming true. Jesus had begun to make a name for himself through his teaching and miracles. In the Gospel of Mark, people had already been warned by John the Baptist of his coming. They heard that he could perform miracles. He just fed 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish. He calmed the seas when the disciples were caught in a storm. He walked on the water toward them as a sign of his saving power. Immediately after

that, crowds were swarming Jesus and the disciples as soon as they got to the shoreline at Gennesaret. The sick were carried in their beds by their loved ones and brought to his feet for healing everywhere he went, even in the marketplace. In Mark 6:56, it was said that all they wanted was to touch the fringe of his garment. And as many who touched it were made well.

Stop and think for a moment. If you were living in this place and time with a sick child at home what would you do? An illness that modern day medicine in our time characterizes as mental illness. Would you do anything you could if it meant your child would be healed?

The mother in our scripture lesson was a Phoenician from Syria (which is now modern day Lebanon). Someone who was born in another part of the world. She was an outsider educated by people who worshiped idols. And yet, she craved a miracle of healing for her daughter from the living God. The one who would be savior of the world. She craved a miracle for her daughter, not for herself.

The fierceness and determination of a mother's love is unstoppable. Even though she was raised in a culture of idol worshippers, she placed her faith in the living God to heal her daughter. A child who it was thought at the time to be possessed by demons and therefore, was at home. She was not even in the presence of Jesus to receive his physical touch of healing; and yet, she did.

The fierceness and determination of the love and healing power of God is unstoppable. It cannot be hidden. Even though Jesus himself just wanted a place to stop and rest in Sidon near the Sea of Galilee, his healing power could not be hidden. It went through the threads of his garments and beyond the healing words that he spoke. It spread by the power of the Holy Spirit to the Syrophonecian woman's daughter who was not even at the scene.

The Syrophonecian woman gave up her entire belief system. She risked the torment of being a Gentile in a foreign land who was taunted by Jews who called people like her dogs. In the Greek, people like her were described as little dogs. Someone who was barely worthy of the crumbs from the scraps leftover from a Jew's dinner table.

It's important to recognize that the language of the tradition has been affected by the prejudices of those who hand it down. Calling someone a dog was the Jewish Christians form of bullying. It is a

prejudiced point of view that we as modern day Christians do not tolerate. It's a term that is ridiculously harsh and unfeeling on the lips of someone like Jesus. Scholars doubt it is a term that he would have used. But instead it was carried forward from the oral tradition of prejudicial Jews.

When praying and researching for this sermon, I came across a line that insinuated there is great advantage in affliction. Just think about that for a moment. There is great advantage in affliction. I think most of us would disagree with this statement, but consider this: It was the distress of this poor woman's family that brought her to Jesus. She gave up everything, her home, her belief system. She risked being bullied by others just to hopefully receive a crumb from the scraps of healing from the living God.

But for Jesus, it wasn't the right time. He said in v. 27, "Let the children be fed first." Here he implies that blessings may come to Gentiles, soon enough, but for now, his calling was to work for the salvation of the Jews first. If you notice, he didn't say no. He didn't refuse her request. He just said in essence, "Not just yet." BUT, because of her words, because she proposed such a compelling argument that, "even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs," Jesus listened. He healed her daughter. She didn't even have to be there!

There are so many other accounts of the healing power of Jesus when he was in their midst, touching them, rubbing their eyes with mud to heal their blindness, praying in front of Lazarus when he rose from the dead, touching a person's ears so they could hear again. All these healings took place with Jesus in their physical presence, but this time he wasn't even close to the one who was sick.

Can you say that you would be as tenacious as this mother? Can you say that you are that fiercely determined in your faith walk to petition God on someone else's behalf? To pray for a miracle when you and I are not even in the physical presence of the living God? I have news for you: You are in the physical presence of the healing, living God. Whether you are in this sanctuary, at your place of business, or hidden under the covers in the comfort of your bed with your eyes closed. Everyone is in the presence of the healing, living God. Before his death, Jesus promised that God would send the gift of the Holy Spirit in his place coequal with him and the father. The

New Testament says all baptized believers in Jesus who are born again, receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit. All the gifts for living and serving God in this life flow from this initial baptism in the Spirit, because in this baptism, the sinner is united to the risen Christ.

Friends, you and I both know people who take their faith for granted. They use it in petitioning God to satisfy their need for instant gratification. It's unfortunate that some folks are so full of themselves and have such high opinions of their own importance. When they address God, they make demands resembling a debt collector calling to demand payment rather than someone who owes God everything.

The Syrophoenician woman epitomizes the meaning of the word "faith." She makes us think through what "faith" really means. It's persistent. It's hopeful even to the point of refusing to expect that even a tiny speck of God's grace was not out of reach. Just a piece of the scraps from God's table of grace can make the difference for all of us. Trusting and accepting Jesus at his word, even if that word is not what we want to hear. Even if that word is "Not just yet."

Look for the Syrophoenician woman in the back row of church today. Maybe she's the one whose reputation discourages her from getting involved. Maybe she slipped out during the last hymn to avoid having to mix with the "churchy insiders." But she keeps coming back, fiercely determined and convinced that if anything that is preached at Center Presbyterian Church week-in and week-out is true, then it's got to be true for her, too.

She's not letting go until she gets her blessing. Will you? Let her faith compel all of us to never give up and be fiercely determined in petitioning the living God. Amen.

Reflections

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Who I Am, What I Do

Brendan Ashley

Brendan is an M.Div. student at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. He hopes to start a New Worshipping Community in Pittsburgh that specifically works with young adults in or recently graduated from college.

What follows is a series of blog posts written from a pastor to his congregation.

This blog focuses on the image of who I am as your pastor as part of God's created order. For me, beloved church, my pastoral identity is best summed up in the image of the pastor as Sabbath-keeper.[1] This is vital for any further discussion in telling you about who I am and what I do. You might be scratching your head and asking, "Isn't this practice out of date, pastor?" or saying to yourself, "I don't need this, because I have Jesus, and he abolished the practice." Yet the Sabbath has been with God's people for thousands of years, and yet it still carries relevance for us today.

As a missional church, Sabbath-keeping is not limited to one isolated 24-hour period, but rather is a part of a lifestyle that is maintained throughout our weekly rhythm of life. Although Sabbath-keeping is a practice with no value in and of itself, its value comes from the fact that it reminds of us of God's grace through the rhythms of our life. It reminds us that any work is built upon the grace of our Lord. God takes a day to rest; how much more do we need that rest! As we sit in traffic on the local interstate, a rhythm that many Americans view as a burden, we have an opportunity to see where the Lord is at work. Instead of listening to the news immediately, take a moment to listen to a prayer app or a praise song. A simple rhythm like this is a way to allow our Sabbath-keeping on Sunday, which focuses on praising the Lord in a state of rest and leisure, to seep into the daily and mundane rhythms of washing dishes, driving to work, going to the grocery store, or playing a video game.

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1 Peterson, Eugene. "The Pastor's Sabbath." Leadership Journal (Christianity Today), 2004: 52-58. 57.
Eugene Peterson reminds me that ministry needs boundaries, so that I do not become another ministry casualty. Negative voices surround those who are called to serve the Lord. Peterson beautifully articulates an ancient practice into a modern context for the betterment of anyone who is about to enter their first call. He provides the necessary balm for pastors to remember that prayer, character, and discipline do not form ex nihilo. If we are going to be healthy pastors, who are rooted in their baptismal call, then we need rhythms of grace that root us to Jesus. The Sabbath is one rhythm in particular that caught my attention. I love that he views it as a counter-cultural rhythm that constantly evokes a life of grace that can only be found if we reserve time and space that points us back to God.

I can imagine that it may be easy to think that my Sabbath is Sunday like it is for many of you, because you have the day off. But for me, Sunday is my biggest work day. Please remember that I have rhythms of my own throughout the week, in order to prepare my heart, mind, and body to point to the Lord on your behalf. Sabbath-keeping allows me to be wrapped in the grace of Jesus, despite the workaholic pressures of the world and the work in the church. Sabbath-keeping does not avoid the work I am called to do, but it is a reminder that any work I do stems from God's call to be God's disciple.

Ultimately I want to be defined by the Lord's grace, rather than the sometimes limitless expectations that vary from person to person. Otherwise, I will be useless to you, and I will negatively affect the health of the church, especially if I preach grace but "practice a theology that puts moral effort as the primary element in pleasing God."[2] As a Sabbath-keeping pastor I am not a person who does stuff just to stay busy; I am a person who seeks rhythms that contemplate the goodness of the Lord, of the creation, and of the world around me. It means that I go to the gym three to four times a week, so that I may remind myself that both mind and body work together. I am a person that has arms, legs, and organs that need release from the pressures of the week. They need a space that reminds them that they belong to God. A Sabbath-keeping pastor learns how to listen for the Lord by going on walks through the city of Pittsburgh. Settling this time aside, even if it is one hour a day or during one 24-hour period, allows me to pray for you, read scriptures and theology, quiet my heart, and remember that God has been in control of this world long-before I showed up: a healthy blow to my little ego. All these practices help me as a Sabbath-keeping pastor to ground my identity so that I may also point the congregation back to God's identity for them.

How many of you have had conversations at church, work, or in a coffee shop in which you felt like the other person was doing all the talking, even though you expected to share in the conversation? Well, as your pastor, I am called to listen to you in intentional spaces where we can listen for the voice of God. As a missional leader navigating the contours of a post-modern and post-Christian society, I am called to be with you in imagining where we have come from, where we are, and where we hope to go as a congregation. In order to expand our

2 Ibid, 57.

imaginations about what I do as the "listening pastor", I must also talk about what I am, and what I am not as your pastor.[3]

First, the listening pastor is not a top-down leader. Normally the pastor is thought to be the CEO of the church, the person who forms the mission and vision of the church, who verifies that all the finances are in order, and who ensures that any idea, project, or committee begins and ends with them. I know things seem bleak within the church as a whole. I understand that you have lost fellow congregants because of death, age and sickness, or because of tensions, social issues of race, class, and gender. I recognize that the future church with louder music, filled seats, and cool pastors makes you feel like an outdated car model or flip phone. I know that there are sociological studies that say the church is declining at astronomical rates. While this may be true, there is a bigger story that is being woven together through our joys and laments. God was, is, and will continue to write our story, which includes broken and bruised congregations. God's love and grace are still working today, even when we are tired of fighting with each other, with the culture, and with God. My task as the pastor is to listen to how God's story, your story, and the culture's story are being woven into one. I listen for this story by walking with you through this change, loss, and scarcity to a place where God calls us into union, a place "that leads us to discover who we truly are with God alone."[4]

Second, the listening pastor does not fix the church, the people, or the culture. I was not called to save you from or soften the blow of the loss that you are experiencing. I am not a pastor who knows the five-ways to an effective ministry. I am not called to trouble-shoot the divisions within the body. I am not going to fix the injustice in our neighborhood. Such tasks would take a herculean effort of which I am not capable. However, I am called to listen for God through a rich prayer life, involvement in the church, and involvement in the

3 The Soul-friend leader is one of things I hope to do as a pastor, as seen in L. Roger Owens and Anthony B. Robinson's article Dark Night of the Church: Relearning the Essentials. As a midwife of the church that is going through labor pains, I am called to listen for the places where the church is in the dark night. As the soul-friend leader, the *anam cara*, listening creates a safe space. It shows that I submit my biased agenda for the sake of God's agenda, and allows me to be with people in their joys and laments. Finally, my listening posture reveals my sincere hope that there is more happening in the congregation then we are willing to admit, because we know that the God of abundance has promised to be with us always.

4 Robinson, L. Roger Owens and Anthony B. "Dark Night of the Church." The Christian Century , 12 14, 2012: 1-4. 2.

community. I am called to create intentional spaces of listening, acting, and reflecting that will allow you to discern the places of hurt within the church that you have to face. I will listen with you in ways that seek to discover the heart of the church, the places where "our primary mission is to be the church."[5] In listening to you and creating such an intentional space, I hope that you will share your fears and confusions without anxiety. If we can bring our dark spots to the light, we can see where God is already working within the congregation. We can identify your passions and how they align with the world around us. No matter how difficult the situation in which we find ourselves, the Lord is working in the midst of our struggles and loss. God is with us, inviting us to relinquish the places of discomfort and familiarity, in order to bring us into the life-giving and hope-filled arms of Christ.

5 Ibid, 2.

Leadership Through Conflict: Black Lives Matter

Allan Irizarry-Graves

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#BlackLivesMatter V. #AllLivesMatter Liturgy and Sermon

Call to Worship:

Though we gather today with heavy hearts and broken spirits over the non-indictment of violent killers of unarmed Black people, we still must rejoice in suffering. We still must keep the faith. We still must continue to fight the fight before us. Don't lose hope. For we will reap what we have sown, if we faint not. Isaiah 30:41 tells us that, "*Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint."* Wait patiently for God will work it out. It is in this spirit that we collectively join in worship.

Congregational Reading (Psalm 34 NKJV)

Minister: I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.

Congregation: My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; The humble shall hear ***of it*** and be glad.

Minister: Oh, magnify the Lord with me,
And let us exalt His name together.
Congregation: I sought the Lord, and He heard me,
And delivered me from all my fears.

Minister: They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces were not ashamed.

Congregation: This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard ***him,*** And saved him out of all his troubles.

Minister: The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them. Congregation: Oh, taste and see that the Lord ***is*** good; Blessed ***is*** the man ***who*** trusts in Him!

Minister: Oh, fear the Lord, you His saints! *There is* no want to those who fear Him.

Congregation: The young lions lack and suffer hunger; But those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good ***thing.*** Minister: Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord.

Congregation: Who ***is*** the man ***who*** desires life, And loves ***many*** days, that he may see good?

Minister: Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit.

Congregation: Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.

Minister: The eyes of the Lord *are* on the righteous, And His ears *are open* to their cry.

Congregation: The face of the Lord ***is*** against those who do evil, To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. Minister: *The righteous* cry out, and the Lord hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles.

Congregation: The Lord ***is*** near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit. Minister: Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all.

Congregation: He guards all his bones; Not one of them is broken.

Minister: Evil shall slay the wicked, And those who hate the righteous shall be condemned.

Congregation: The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.

Prayer and Moment of silence for Black lives lost:

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, thou who has brought us thus far on the way. Lift every voice and sing, shout, cry, and scream until earth and heaven ring Black lives matter. God we need you in this moment of craziness and despair. Lord, we trust you are still in control even though it does not feel like it. God, help us to declare and show that Black lives truly do matter. Lord, we pray for those who say all lives matter as a means of undermining the Black lives matter movement. Open their hearts, minds, and spirits to understand the injustices that we as Blacks experience and reveal to them how saying all lives matter is silencing our cries and diluting the value of Black lives. Help them to realize how easy it is to say all lives matter if society has always treated you as if your life mattered. Lord, we know that specific pain calls for specific slogans. God, help all of us to not view this as a moment in time, but as a piece of the multi-generational struggle that we as Blacks have experienced during our time here in America. God help us to put action behind our faith to be the hands and feet of Jesus when dealing with the institutional sin of racism that has built this nation. God help us to see the value of Black lives at all times, not just when they die. Help us to not forget those Black lives who were martyred violently. In Jesus name, Amen. Please join me in a moment of silence as we honor those who have lost their lives:

Freddie Gray	Eric Garner	Kimani Gray
Kevin Allen	Victor White	Marissa Williams
Rumain Brisbon	Yvette Smith	Timothy Russell
Tamir Rice	McKenzie Cochran	Reynaldo Cuevas
Akai Gurley	Jordan Baker	Chavis Carter
Kajieme Powell	Andy Lopez	Shantel Davis
Ezell Ford	Miriam Carey	Ervin Jefferson
Dante Parker	Johnathan Ferrell	Kendrec McDade
Michael Brown	Carlos Alcis	Rekia Boyd
John Crawford III	Larry Jackson	Ramarley Gray
Tyree Woodson	Deion Fludd	Trayvon Martin

Song: "I Need Thee Every Hour"

Sermon: 1 Peter 2:9

"We as Black Folk Matter"

Because of the recent murders of unarmed Black people such as Mike Brown, Eric Garner, John Crawford, Tamir Rice and many others along with the non-indictment of their killers America is experiencing an unprecedented level of awareness around issues of racism in America. These events have caused many responses and emotions to rise out of people's hurt, disbelief, pain, and anger. To be honest, one of the responses I experienced included self-doubt and low self-esteem. As a young black man in America, I have often questioned why my life was not viewed as significant. I have questioned why I feel that I live in a country that does not want me here. I have questioned why black lives do not matter the same as white lives. This simply should not be anyone's reality in America, the land of the free and the home of the brave. Too often as Blacks in America, we are looked at and viewed as subpar or less than that of our counterparts. We are looked at as if our lives matter less than others do. We are constantly profiled by the media as thugs, hoodrats, and no good. Though people are not saying Black lives do not matter verbally, they are clearly saying it by their actions. We all know actions speak louder than words.

I come to bear witness that this is not an accident, but rather, has been designed purposely by the enemy in an attempt to destroy us as a people. These lies feed into our spirits as a people and if we are not careful to guard ourselves, we will soon find ourselves suffering from low self-esteem, self-hatred, and depression. If we are not careful, we will soon find ourselves hating who we are. If we are not careful, we will soon find ourselves giving up hope on our dreams and aspirations. If we are not careful, we will even find ourselves doubting the God-given calls and purposes on our lives. We must tell ourselves that we are worth something, that we are significant, and that our Black lives matter. Those who say all lives matter cannot overpower us. Specific pain calls for specific slogans. The reason why the Black lives matter movement came about was to address the specificity of the issues facing Black people in America. Stating that all lives matter is a means of ignoring the real issue at hand, that Black lives in America are not

treated with the same value as those of other lives in America. For those claiming that Black lives matter is too exclusive of a statement and that it deemphasizes the dignity of others, be quiet. I would rather you not say anything than to say something stupid. I am sick and tired of those in power telling us what to say and how to say it. Last I checked we too are citizens of America and according to the U.S. Constitution have a right to free speech. When we say Black lives matter, we are saying Black lives matter in addition to all the other lives that matter more to certain people. Do not forget about us as if we are not humans. Do not treat us as less than. Because we definitely mattered when we built this country and gave it the economic wealth it has today. We are not dispensable. We are not less. We are a great people. We are not trash. We matter. We have contributed greatly to society. We matter. Black lives matter. Black lives matter.

When we look at the text in 1 Peter 2:9 we see these words, "*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."* This text shows us that we matter to God. Looking into the text gives us insight into how God sees us. The first way that God sees us is as a chosen generation. The definition of chosen here signifies that you are a choice. God has chosen us. Out of all the people God could have chosen, He saw fit to make us His choice. If God sees us as so significant that He chooses us, then we need to be able to choose ourselves as those who are significant. We need to see that we matter. Too many of us are struggling with our identity and see ourselves as insignificant because we don't yet know that our identity is in how Christ views us and not how we or anyone else views us. We matter because God sees us as a chosen generation.

The second way that God sees us in the text is as a royal priesthood. Let me make this very clear, we must be careful that we don't get this confused and think that our royal status comes from our own doing. Royalty in this sense implies that we are considered royal because we have a special connection to the King, Jesus Christ. Royalty implies there is a connection through the bloodline. All of the royals in England are connected to Queen Elizabeth by bloodline somehow, someway. This family's royalty is fine and dandy. However, the royalty that you and I possess is the greatest royalty of all. We are connected to the King of kings and the Lord of lords. We are

considered royal because we share in the power of the blood of Jesus Christ. The blood of Jesus that saved us and washed us white as snow. The blood that gives us strength from day to day, that will never lose its power. It is because of the blood of Jesus that we can live boldly knowing that we are somebody and that we as Black folks matter. Can we thank God that because we are connected to Him, we are not junk, sloppy leftovers, or insignificant? Because of our connectedness with God through the blood of Jesus and His relationship with us, we have His power in us. We are important. Our Black lives matter. For we are made in the image of God. God sees us as royalty.

The third way that God sees us is as a holy nation. Holy in this sense implies sacred. God sees us as a sacred nation. Scared things and sacred people have value. Some things are so sacred that they are invaluable. We are sacred and valuable to God. No one should be able to dictate the value of our lives. ONLY GOD SHOULD!! God sees that we as Blacks matter just as much as anyone else on the face of this plant. If he did not think we mattered he would have never given his son Jesus Christ as the ultimate sacrifice. He's basically saying that because I see you as sacred I will give up my only begotten son, Jesus the Christ for you. And the fact that He made that decision before any of us were even born is a testament to how significant each and every one of us is to Him. When God sacrificed Jesus He had you on His mind. We matter because God sees us as a holy nation.

The last way that God sees us is as His own special people. We are the possession of God. Our significance and our value alone does not come from the fact that we are special people, but it comes from the fact that we are HIS special people. The only way that we gain significance and value is by whose we are. We are children of the Most High God. We are the apple of His eye, we are the cream of His crop. We are the people of the only true living true God. Ephesians 2:10 says, "*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."* We matter because we are God's.

Because we as Black folk matter, we must go forward to proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous Light. Why must we do this? We are commanded to do this so that others can experience the love of God and realize that they too matter. Not only are we to proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of

darkness into His marvelous light, we have to put action behind our words and make it happen. Though God has called some of us out of darkness into His marvelous light, not all of us are experiencing the fullness of the light. Not everyone is out of darkness.

- When we still have Black people being murdered by those who are called to protect and serve us, we still have work to do.
- When we have a school to prison pipeline that disproportionately incarcerates Black children's lives, we still have work to do.
- When we have private companies on Wall Street profiting off the influx of Black people incarcerated in this country, we still have work to do.
- When the typical black household has just 6% of the wealth of the typical white household[1], we still have work to do.
- When the education system of those in urban, poor, Black neighborhoods is subpar to those in the suburbs, we still have works to do.

This list can go on and on, but it is not necessary to elaborate on that which is already known. We know the struggles we face as Black people. We know what we need and what has to be done in order to live lives that are equal to the rest of America's citizenry. To my white brothers and sisters I am demanding you to speak up and out about the injustices that we as Black people experience. We need your voice because in today's society your voice holds the most weight and is heard the clearest, even in issues that affect us. You have a certain level of privilege that we just do not have. Use your privilege to help all people reach equality. This is why White people can no longer say all lives matter. You must say Black lives matter! It will not be easy, but it is necessary. To my Black brothers and sisters, I implore you to live your life as if it matters. I demand that we declare Black lives matter all the time, not just when they are murdered. If we started teaching each other that our Black lives matter while we are still alive, I guarantee you we would see a change in how we as a people operate in the here and now. Don't ever let anybody tell you that you do not matter, that you have no worth. And because Black

1 Sullivan, Laura, Tatjana Meschede, Lars Dietrich, Thomas Shapiro, Amy Traub, Catherine Reutschlin, and Tamara Draut. "The Racial Wealth Gap: Why Policy Matters." Www.demos.org. Accessed November 19, 2015.

folk matter, it does not matter how others view you. You are a child of the most-high God, you are connected to the King of kings and the Lord of lords. You are made in the image of God. You as a Black person in America matter, even if others cannot see it. Black Lives Matter! Black Lives Matter!

Reflection

Here I will give a brief explanation of the liturgy and sermon as they related to the conflict of #BlackLivesMatter v. #AllLivesMatter. I will do this using ideas from Lyon and Moseley's *Preaching and Practicing Liturgy: Resources for Leading Congregations in Conflict.* I chose to write about this specific conflict because it is a conflict that America and even the greater church is not dealing with. Furthermore, I chose to write about this because the topic is near and dear to my heart because it has a large impact on my life because I can easily be one of those killed by cops.

The liturgy is designed to address the hurt and pain that Blacks are experiencing as a result of the killings of unarmed Black citizens in America along with the non-indictment of many of their killers. Furthermore, the liturgy is designed to show those experiencing hurt and pain that God is with them. In the Black church context, much emphasis is placed on remembering ancestors and the connectedness of all as one people. This is why a moment of silence was put into the service as a means of honoring the lives lost.

The sermon portion of this paper was preached previously during a youth service at Baptist Temple Church, a predominantly Black church in the Homewood neighborhood of Pittsburgh, PA in December of 2014. The sermon has been changed significantly to address the page limit. However, the main points are still the same and address the conflict between the two opposing viewpoints. First, I wanted to call out the tragedy that Blacks experience as citizens in America. Moreover, I wanted the Black congregants to know that they matter in the eyes of God and that because they do it calls them to fight so that others might know their lives matter as well. Lastly, I wanted to challenge White members of the congregation to use their privilege and power to declare that Black lives matter. I wanted to inform them how saying All lives matter is counteractive to the mission of the Black lives matter movement.

There are many ways this sermon and liturgy set-up relates to the Lyon and Moseley article and other things learned in the class. However, I will focus on one main sentence and detail how it connects to the liturgy and sermon. Lyon and Moseley state that, "Conflict can best contribute to renewal and transformation when it is not avoided but when people move more fully into it and discover what it might offer for their moving toward a new place in their future."[2] There is a connection to this throughout the entirety of this liturgy and sermon. This is evidenced by the fact that I am addressing the issues of systemic racism that many people, including the church, do not want to address. We see transformative changes occurring in our society because of people dealing with the issue of systemic racism in this country head on. There seems to have been an enlightenment of sorts for those who previously denied that institutional racism exists in the 21st century. Furthermore, it shows how we as a nation have discovered what our place in the future will be if we do not address issues of racism that negatively impact Black lives. But, I believe dealing with this conflict directly gives us a preview of the beloved community where Black lives matter the same as other lives matter in this country. Lastly, the liturgy and sermon shows how stating "all lives matter" is a means of not dealing directly with the conflict. Stating all lives matter is looking past the obvious and not directly addressing the issue at hand. Therefore, we cannot allow people to say all lives matter. We must boldly declare Black lives matter.

2 Lyon, K. Brynolf, and Dan Moseley. "Preaching and Practicing Liturgy: Resources for Leading Congregations in Conflict." In *How to Lead in Church Conflict: Healing Ungrieved Loss*. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2012, 123.

Honoring Professor Paul Lapp as a Model for Ministry

Kelly Jean Norris

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The 2015 publication of the archaeological report of Paul Lapp's final full excavation, Tell er-Rumeith, gives occasion to remember Rev. Dr. Lapp's extraordinary life and work. Paul Lapp was one who embodied creative and bi-vocational ministry, asking the big questions of faith and study, caring deeply for those around him, and living out his convictions in both words and deeds. R. Thomas Schaub, a doctoral student of the Rev. Dr. Paul Lapp, described his mentor as a person who lived the very definition of a creative and bi-vocational ministry: "Paul Lapp was best known for his brilliant work in field archaeology. He was also a professor of Old Testament, a preacher of the Word of God, and a keen student of current events on the world political scene." Sadly, his life was cut short at the age of 39, and he was survived by his wife Nancy and their five children.

Nancy Lapp has persisted tirelessly to bring the work that she and Paul started together to completion, finishing many of the excavation reports from their eight years of work at the Jerusalem School. The most recent of these, *Tell Er-Rumeith: The Excavations of Paul W. Lapp, 1962 and 1967* by Tristan J. Barako and Nancy Lapp, was published in April 2015--45 years after Paul's death. This article stands as a tribute to Paul Lapp and considers his life and work as a model for ministry today.

By the age of 25, Paul Lapp had already distinguished himself as an accomplished student and was ordained in the Lutheran Church. The California native had a Diploma in Theology from Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis, an M.A. in Education from Washington University in St. Louis, and a Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of California. Yet, Paul's fellow students remembered him as a restless young person who considered pursuing a career in music.

A desire to continue Old Testament Studies led Lapp to Johns Hopkins University in 1955 to study under W. F. Albright, who is considered the Father of Palestinian Archaeology and who insisted on studies in ancient Near Eastern history, Semitic languages, and archaeology for Biblical studies. At Hopkins Paul Lapp met Nancy

Renn who was also studying with Albright and working as his graduate assistant. The two were married in 1957 and headed to the Jerusalem School where Paul was an American School of Oriental Research (ASOR) Fellow; they gained their first field experience at Tell Balatah (Shechem).

In his book *The Tale of the Tell,* Paul Lapp describes archaeology as "a love affair between an archaeologist and an ancient ruin," and it appears that both Paul and Nancy Lapp fell deeply in love with field study. After publishing his dissertation at Harvard Divinity School, *Palestinian Ceramic Chronology, 200 B.C. to A.D. 70*, and thereby earning his second doctorate, Paul and Nancy returned to Jerusalem where Paul was Director and Professor of Archaeology at ASOR from 1960-1968.

During these eight years, Paul Lapp was extraordinarily active, directing excavations at seven different sites, among them the caves of Wadi ed-Daliyeh which contained papyri from the fourth century B.C., the vast cemetery at Bab edh-Dhra, and the Iron Age border town of Tell er-Rumeith. In the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research,* Delbert Hillers remarked, "to dig with Paul Lapp was exhilarating, instructive, and above all exhausting for those who had to try to keep up with him." In addition to his extensive field work, Lapp recognized the importance of publishing his finds for the scholastic community. Amazingly, as the *Harvard Theological Review* noted, in ten years Lapp published "some sixty items, virtually all based on original research." After his untimely and tragic death in a swimming accident at the age of 39, in a show of scholarly respect, three institutions put together collections of articles in memory of Paul. Among the contributors are W.F. Albright, Kathleen Kenyon, Raymond E. Brown, Roland DeVaux and G. Ernest Wright. Truly Paul Lapp was a scholar among scholars.

But it is not only the breadth of work which can be admired, but also the depth and integrity with which his research was completed. While doing precise excavation work at the sites named above, Paul Lapp continued to ask the big questions about the goals of biblical archaeology and history.

In his book, aptly titled *Biblical Archaeology and History*, Lapp takes a critical look at the kinds of questions archaeologists ask and how they ask them. Writing for a general audience, he takes his

readers through a scholarly exercise, helping them to understand the difficulty of recording and interpreting a current event and then explaining how the challenges inherent in the historical process are magnified when researching ancient artifacts. Despite his brilliant mind and the ease at which Lapp took towards archaeological research, he insisted upon taking a humble stance, recognizing how little one scholar can actually know and how much the bias of the scholar influences not only how data is studied and interpreted but also what is chosen for study.

When describing how archaeology relates to the field of Biblical studies, Lapp sharply asserts that archaeology should not be used to try to prove the Bible: "The contention that archaeological evidence substantiates the historical truth of the Bible shows a complete misunderstanding of archaeology and of the Bible...It is the height of sacrilege to think that archaeologists in their layers of dirt and tatters of walls would have a key to answering the question, 'Is the Christian's faith in God true?'" Yet, this does not mean that Lapp thought the field of Biblical archaeology was irrelevant for Biblical study. Quite to the contrary, he devoted his life to it, explaining that one cannot begin to ask the question of what the Biblical text means until one understands what it meant, in its own time and context.

With this goal of truly understanding the Biblical text and context in mind, Paul Lapp was relentlessly committed to using the best practices of his day for archaeological digs in the Near East. His colleague H. J. Franken recalls Lapp strongly criticizing some for their "lack of courage to break with obsolete methods" in favor of new archaeological techniques, and Lapp chastised Franken for not publicizing sooner a dig technique which could have improved his own work in the field. The *Harvard Theological Review* describes Lapp as "rigorously honest, but impatient with those whose scholarship and research lacked the fierce discipline he required of himself."

Despite his meticulous attention to detail and high expectations for those with whom he worked, Paul Lapp never lost sight of the people who were affected both directly and indirectly by his work. When Lapp became a professor at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, some had feared he would hide among the pot sherds and be unavailable to students, but instead those who studied under

him described him as one who was keenly interested in the life of seminary and the joy and sorrows of his students.

This comes as no surprise to those who knew him during his years in Palestine. Paul Lapp was known for creating an environment of warm hospitality. Colleagues recalled for *PTS's Memorial Minute* after Lapp's passing, "the relaxed Paul Lapp was frequently seen on a dig after an evening meal. With both American and Arab staff gathered together, stories would be told, jokes would be shared, pranks would be played, songs would be sung, always in English and Arabic, and with Paul Lapp as the personality bringing all together."

One of Lapp's students, archaeologist Tom Schaub, who went on to continue Paul Lapp's work at Bab edh-Dhra describes an ongoing conversation he and Paul would have about prophetic voices. Tom asserts that the key to being a prophet is to be a listener, one who listens to God and to the voices of the people around him. This listening to diverse voices could bring Paul into conflict with some of his colleagues. He was quite vocal about the treatment of Palestinians both before and after the 1967 Six-Day war saying, "The Six-Day War resulted in the liberation and the reunification of Jerusalem from an Israeli perspective, but to the residents of Jordanian Jerusalem it has meant occupation by a conquering power, with fear of that knock on the door at night followed by arrest and indefinite incarceration." Paul argued that one could never be truly politically neutral, and so instead, political positions must be made thoughtfully.

Sadly, Paul Lapp's untimely death limited the number of PTS students and faculty who could learn directly from his tireless work-ethic, inquisitive mind, and dedication to truth learned through research and prophetic listening. But through the dedication and persistence of Nancy Lapp, Paul's research is being made available to the scholarly community and general public. And in an age when bi-vocational and creative ministries are becoming the norm instead of the exception, perhaps we can look at Paul's life as a trend-setting model. Perhaps we too can learn to follow our curiosity in a way that leads to seeing a broad range of vocations as ministry, encourages multidisciplinary thinking, and initiates greater faith within a more open community.

Poetry

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Worth

Alina Kanaski

Alina Kanaski is a senior M.Div. student. She hopes to enter small church ministry after graduation.

In a world where
I am my body,
a thing for men to look at
and lust after;
in a world where
I am not whole,
not fully human,
because I am a woman;
in a world where
my existence is meant
to please men,
who are so much more important
than I am–
in a world
that fights so hard
to refer to me
by my body,
You, O God,
are different.
You created me.
You reassure me,
as a beloved child.
I am no one's object.
I am no one's sex toy.
I am no one's eye candy.
When I feel worthless,
You remind me of my worth.
"I the Father created you,
I the Son died for you,
I the Spirit live in you now."

I am a child of God,
I know deep in my bones.
I am a part of God's church,
I am filled with the Spirit.

I come to the Bible and read:
"I have two virgin daughters.
Take them instead," he tells the crowd
begging for rape.[1]

The wife of Potiphar;
the youngest daughter of Lot;
Hosea's wife the whore;
the Canaanite woman–
we are not worthy
of names of our own,
of standing on our own
apart from men.

"Go, kidnap for yourselves wives
from among the daughters of Shiloh
when they come out to dance."
Vows forbid permission,
and so they kidnap instead.[2]
"And I will give you into the hand of your lovers,
and they shall throw down
your vaulted chamber...
naked and bare."
Rape for infidelity.[3]
"Women shall be silent in church,"
wrote he, even if there is no male
or female in Christ.[4]
"Go in to my maid;

1 Genesis 19.
2 Judges 21:20-22.
3 Ezekiel 16:39.
4 1 Corinthians 14:34, Galatians 3:28.

it may be that I shall obtain children
by her,"
as if she were a cow.[5]
"So the man seized his concubine,
and put her out to them;
and they knew her, and abused her all night
until the morning.
And as the dawn began to break, they let her go.
And as morning appeared,
the woman came and fell down at the door
of the man's house where her master was, till it was light."
He threw her out
to be gang raped,
and he wouldn't even open the door to her
when she crawled back.[6]

Horror chokes me,
chokes my prayers.
What now?
You, O God, gave me worth,
a place at the table,
and the Bible so often
doesn't.

5 Genesis 16:2.
6 Judges 19:25-26.

God Set a Table In The Wilderness

Rev. David Averill

Rev. David Averill is a Doctor of Ministry student at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in the Parish Focus that meets on the campus of Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida; Pastor of St. John's United Methodist Church of Winter Haven, FL; husband to his better half, Alesia Kuliashova Averill; and father to a baby boy named Daniel Taylor Averill.

Abstract

"God set a table in the wilderness" is written in a poetic form called a pantoum, made popular by European Orientalists in the 19th century. It also draws on the modern, Dadaist tradition of the "found poem," creating a collage of texts from various sources with slight alterations to create new meanings. This found poem is a collage of various Biblical verses, reflecting on consistent character of God in the face of the inconsistent character of God's creatures and creation.

God set a table in the wilderness,
Spread abroad like a cedars of Lebanon
Where all the beasts of the field drank their fill,
And the Samaritan woman sat at the well.

Spread abroad like a cedar of Lebanon,
Leviathan makes the water boil
Where Rachel and Jacob sat at the well
And Onan's seed must have spilled.

Leviathan makes the water boil
Whence the lake of fire is the second death,
And Onan's seed must have spilled
Upon the cities of the plain

Whence the lake of fire is the second death,
Into the desert to be tempted by the devil,
God passed through the cities of the plain,
And God's heart was filled with pain.

Into the desert to be tempted by the devil,
Though God walks through the valley of the shadow of death,
Upon the cities of the plain,
God will set a table in the wilderness.

Submission Information

General Guidelines:

Entry: Send all submissions to journal@pts.edu as an attachment using Microsoft Word file format. Attach images and graphs, charts and lists as separate .jpg or .pdf files.

Title page: Be sure to include a title page with the following information: name, title of article, abstract (50-100 words), e-mail address, and phone number. Give a one sentence autobiography including (but not limited to) your name, academic title or position, institutional affiliation and location.

Originality: All work must be original and not previously published.

Formatting Principles:

- Adhere to the guidelines of the Kate L. Turabian's Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (6th rev. ed., 1996). See the PTS Student Handbook for details.
- Include both footnotes and a bibliography.
- For biblical languages, use fonts provided by the Society of Biblical Literature only.
- Page format: 1 inch margins, double-spaced, Times New Roman, font size 12.
- Use gender inclusive language.
- Do not include your name anywhere other than on the title page.
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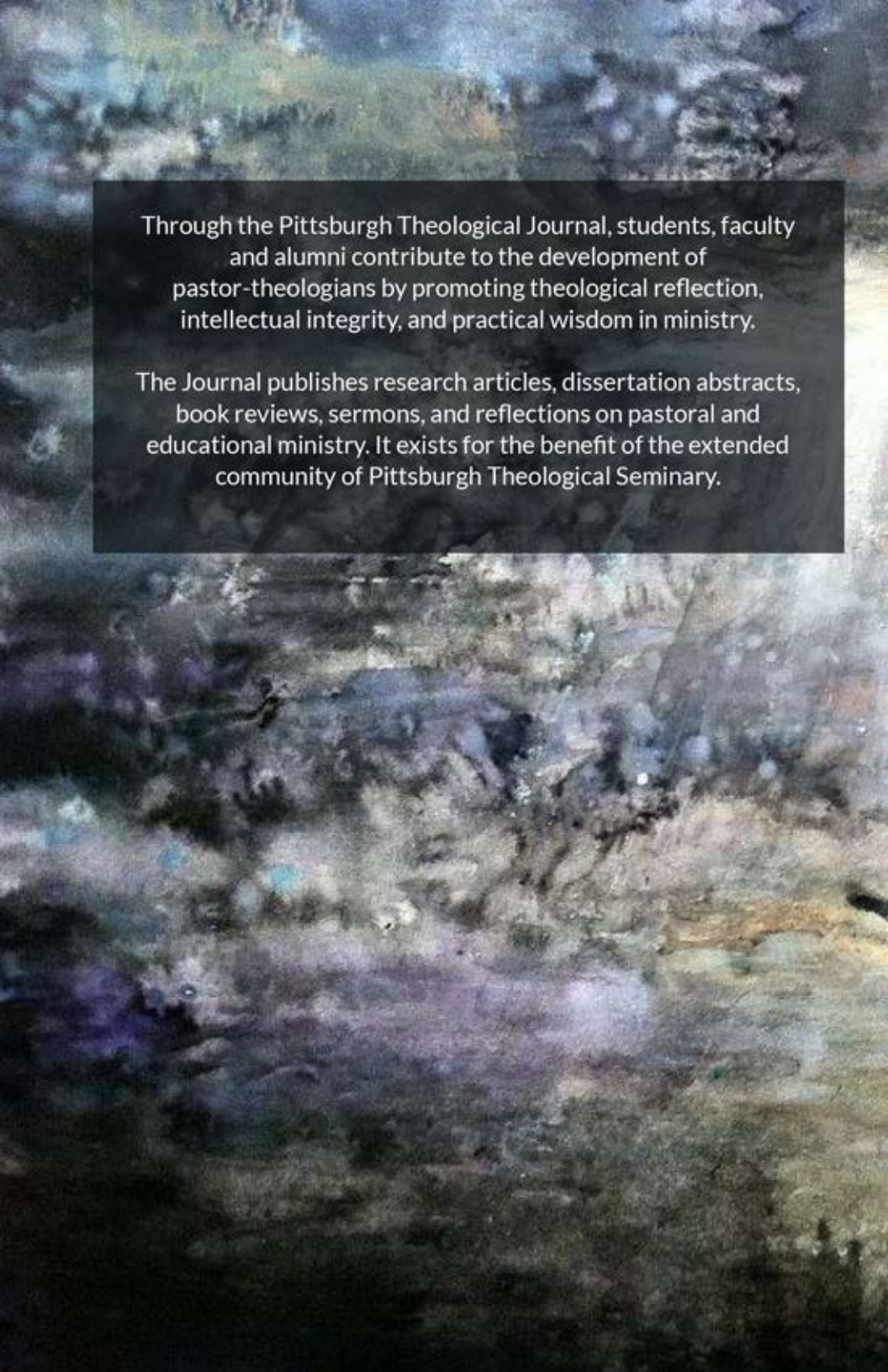

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