

## ABSTRACTS

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*Abstracts compiled as submitted by Chairs*

### Arts and Religion

#### **"The Tibetan Buddhist Goddess Tara and the Iconography to Allay Fear"**

Karen Nelson Villanueva, Ph.D., Institute for Contemporary Buddhist Ministry

The principal form of Tara is Green Tara. In Tibetan, she is described as *sNgo sangs* or *syama* in Sanskrit, which can be translated as any dark or swarthy color such as brown, black, blue, gray, or green. Additionally, Tara's description, as *Syama*, is the name of the Bengali Mother Goddess.

According to Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, green is the color related to the wind element and implies activity. It is the color of the Karma or Action Family and its members are concerned with one's protection. In this family unit, Tara is the mother and the father is Amoghasiddha, the Buddha of All-Accomplishing Wisdom. As a representative of "buddha karma" or "enlightenment energy/activity," Tara has the ability to manifest in whatever form it takes to accomplish her mission. Therefore, her appearance and manifestations are limitless. Moreover, her manifestations each have their own unique mantra reflecting the differing aspects of the Goddess.

The Goddess Tara is most commonly depicted as a beautiful young woman of sixteen years old and a bright green hue. Tara's youthfulness may be attributed to her enlightenment, which bestows beings with mental vigor and joy, as well as a physical stamina similar to that of a mature teenager. She has black hair that she wears in a topknot with the rest streaming down her shoulders. She is dressed in a flowing skirt that is often a rainbow of colors and she sometimes wears a half shirt or no shirt at all. Although Tara is a Buddha, like a Bodhisattva she is adorned with the finest jewels on every part of her body.

As a Goddess, Tara sits upon a lotus throne in a posture that is unique to her: her left leg is drawn up in the posture of meditation indicating that her mind always remains at rest in meditative equipoise; while her right leg is extended in the heroine posture indicating that she is fully active in worldly activities and ready to spring forth to our aid. Her right-hand gesture is called "Supreme Generosity," which indicates how the paths of meditation and mantra practice lead to enlightenment. Her left-hand gesture is called "Bestowing Refuge," which points to how meditation and mantra practice bring about the protection from the Three Jewels of Refuge (i.e., Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha). With both of her hands, she grasps the stem of the utpala flower, a large blue lotus, that indicates the beauty and purity of her practice.

In Tibetan, Tara is known as *Drolma* or *Dolma*, which means "Savior" and one of her manifestations is as the Savior from the Eight Great Dangers, Astamahabhayatrana Tara. In her depiction at the Sumtsek Temple in Alchi, Ladakh, Tara stands on a double throne surrounded by a mandorla. As in her normal depiction she is green with one head, but here has eight arms. Each of her hands holds an object or makes a gesture intended to allay fear. In this presentation, I will describe each of these gestures and their relevance to helping one to overcome fear.

#### **"Romanising Judaism, Judaising Romanism: The Zodiac Mosaics and the Roman and Byzantine Worlds"**

Gillian Glass, Ph.D., University of British Columbia

The zodiac motif mosaics of Late Antique Palestine are an extraordinary example of the transmission of images and the ideas they represent from one culture to another. Attentive study of this Jewish artwork helps us understand the interactions between Jews and their Hellenic and Roman neighbours in Palestine

in Late Antiquity. This paper considers how mosaics from the Roman Empire from outside of Palestine can shed new light on these pieces of artwork. This analysis, which places these mosaics into the wider context of the Greco-Roman world during the last centuries of the Roman Empire, will contribute to modern debates around the significance of this imagery.

There are currently six known zodiac mosaics from ancient Palestine, and one in Astypalaea in Greece. Every mosaic dates to the end of the Roman Empire and beginning of the Byzantine Era (fourth to sixth centuries CE). Depicting Helios surrounded by the twelve signs of the zodiac and the seasons personified, scholars have sought to understand the religious, social, and political significance of these images, which adorn houses of worship. I approach these mosaics as elements of social history, as images that can help us trace aspects of material acculturation by the Jewish communities of Palestine.

My argument has three elements. I start by providing a broader context of these images, calling upon examples from outside of Palestine. While these images contain at least one of the components constituting the zodiac motif, they are not set out in the same pattern. This will illustrate the representations of time in other areas under Roman rule in the centuries leading up to the installation of the Palestinian mosaics. The versatility of these images made them artistically ideal in many regions of the Empire. In this section mosaics from North Africa are particularly valuable, as they provide fascinating examples of the acculturation of politically-charged images. The second section of this paper shows how these symbols passed into Palestinian artwork, detailing the shift from Roman civil to Jewish civil decorations. Third, I will consider the transition from Jewish civil to Jewish religious environments for these mosaics. I contend that these symbols are a manifestation of acculturation by Jewish communities living under Roman rule. This analysis is squarely planted between the extremes of interpretation, with a purely aesthetic enjoyment of the images on the one hand, and a deeply spiritual or mystical reading of the mosaics on the other. I find that Palestine must be understood within the larger context of the Roman Empire, which manifests an intense interest in the concept of time. Understanding how these symbols differ from and adhere to Roman artistic tendencies furthers our understanding of what it was like to live in the Palestinian communities, as well as the integration of Palestine and Jews into the Roman Empire.

### **“Painting the Pantheon: Visual Art, Local Cults, and the Daoist Institution in Late Imperial China”**

Aaron Reich, University of Wisconsin-Madison

In late imperial China, paintings and statues of the gods had a central role in bridging local cults with larger religious institutions. One such example is currently housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York: a 30-foot painted handscroll dating from the final years of the Ming period (1641), which I refer to as The Canonization Scroll of Li Zhong (hereafter Canonization Scroll). The painting and its colophons respectively illustrate and describe a process known as daofeng 道封, literally "conferral of the Way," which scholars now gloss as "canonization." The term denotes the liturgical promotion of a local god into the authorized pantheon of the largest Daoist institution at the time, the Zhengyi Order of Dragon-Tiger Mountain (Longhu shan 龍虎山). In one earlier study, Daoist scholar Vincent Goosaert discusses the scroll briefly, calling it "the most detailed document I have found on this procedure [daofeng]."

Despite this claim to the handscroll's rarity, and its potential to contribute to our knowledge of how Ming society practiced and painted canonization rites, work on this object remains quite scarce. In the world of art history, it has received some attention, but only in comparison to the more well-known and prestigious Ordination Scroll of Empress Zhang (1493), another monumental handscroll with similar formal features, subject matter, and liturgical functions. With an emphasis on comparative study, existing scholarship on Canonization Scroll has entirely overlooked one of its most important features: namely, that the painting illustrates not only a canonization, but a canonization by proxy. That is to say, the illustration shows a ritual performed by a local priest, within a local community, on behalf of the Zhengyi Daoist patriarch, who had his residence at the distant Dragon-Tiger Mountain. The painting does not, by

contrast, illustrate a canonization ritual performed by the patriarch himself, as others have suggested. The practice of canonization by proxy has a close connection to ordinations by proxy, a practice that Daoist scholar Hsieh Tsung-hui has identified in his study of ordination documents from Taiwan during the Qing dynasty (1644–1912).

This new interpretation of Canonization Scroll elevates its historical significance. Not only is it superlative as a "detailed document" on the canonization of local gods in late imperial China, as Goosaertt rightly addresses, but it furthermore introduces the notion of representative liturgical performance (whereby a local priest represents the Zhengyi Daoist patriarch) as an effective way to connect local communities with a national religious institution. This representative ritual process through which local gods may become canonized into the Daoist pantheon has not, to my knowledge, been explored in previous scholarship. As my presentation addresses, the Daoist institution could greatly increase the reach of its territorial network by allowing local communities to ordain priests and canonize gods at a distance from Dragon-Tiger Mountain. And in many cases, at the heart of this process, we find pictures of the gods.

For images: <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/38.31.1/>.

Please note that the MET website uses an alternative title for the painting.

**"From Liminality to Community: Burying the Dead in *The Sorrow of War*"**

Rebecca Moore, Ph.D., Independent Scholar

One of the oldest human behaviors is that of caring for the dead. Archaeologists have found graves made by Neanderthal humans more than 60,000 years old. Anthropologist Robert Hertz identifies three death rituals: those concerning the body of the deceased, the soul of the deceased, and the survivors. But what happens when ritual processes are short-circuited by the horrors of war? Combat frequently prevents completion of even the most basic acts of respect for the dead. When bodies are blown to bits, are buried at the place of death, or are deliberately destroyed through genocide, ordinary care for the dead is often unavailable or abandoned.

This paper argues that *The Sorrow of War*, written by Bao Ninh, provides in fiction the rituals for the dead that were derailed by the war in Vietnam. The paper first discusses Robert Hertz to understand death rituals before examining Victor Turner's theories about ritual. This sets the stage for demonstrating that the novel transfers the war dead from Turner's state of liminality to a state of *communitas*, or re-integration of both the dead and the living in their proper spheres of existence.

An close reading of *The Sorrow of War* then assesses the ways in which the author, a North Vietnamese combat veteran, carries out the rites of burial, prayer, and remembrance through fiction. In the novel, soldiers enact traditional rituals to ease the passage of the dead to their final destination, despite official prohibitions on such practices. Examples of secret and hidden rituals, and of symbolic care for the dead, appear throughout Bao Ninh's book.

The paper concludes by observing that the living and the dead are reunited in *communitas* in the fictional rituals that are portrayed. This reunification serves to alleviate the trauma of war for both fictional characters and for readers.

**"A good death is a ritual of initiation for everyone involved"**

Sarah Kerr, Ph.D., Independent Scholar

*See insert*

Lisa Beyeler, Duke Divinity School, Duke University, **"Unmaking the Earth: The Destruction of Place as Cultural and Spiritual Warfare"**

There is an innate connection between God and place. As image-bearers of our Creator we are called to the architectural task of making and remaking the earth. Our physical landscape is the garden in which we live and are tasked with cultivating into wholeness. Wrestling with this calling is an essential aspect of our humanity and spirituality. This multimedia presentation will explore the power of place and express its relevance in our increasingly diverse and multivalent society.

The obverse of our creation task, and the focus of this paper, is the capacity for human beings to unmake the earth. Human beings have available both the privilege to reveal and enhance the sacredness of the physical world as well as the power to desecrate it. In Nazi Germany, religious leaders, architects, and military powers worked in concert to sanction, design, and perform war crimes that used place against their inhabitants – displacing communities, creating ghettos, looting and destroying synagogues and churches, constructing extermination camps, and leveling entire cities. In our current political landscape, these patterns of de-creation continue on a global sphere: from the Syrian genocide and destruction of Aleppo to the calculated destruction of sacred sites by ISIL to the erection of labor camps in North Korea to the central role of architecture and place in the xenophobic rhetoric of our recent presidential election.

Bringing together William Cavanaugh's analysis of torture as political assimilation, Paul J. Griffiths' liturgical theology as it relates to collective memory and ritual, and Robert Bevan's investigation of architectural destruction as cultural genocide, this paper aims to explore the profound spiritual ramifications connected to the desecration of place. Threaded throughout this presentation is the argument that the destruction of our built and natural environments is not simply demolition; it is the systematic attack and erasure of personhood – of a people. This presentation will encourage spiritual leaders to explore the spiritual dimensions and significance of place and proclaim a new kind of place that speaks to the principles of justice, equity, and human dignity.

Matt Kershaw, Brigham Young University, **"The Salvation of the Grunt: Existential Alienation and Ecclesiology of the Trenches in Maximilian Uriarte's *The White Donkey*"**

Maximilian Uriarte's 2016 graphic novel *The White Donkey* depicts the experience of a young man as he enlists in the US Marine Corps, subsequently deploys to Iraq, and then deals with redeployment issues (including PTSD). Although it is uncertain whether Uriarte intends to open his work to allegorical reading, the work suggests some strong connections to the Christian salvation theme, as the main character Abe develops a powerful attachment to Garcia, a largely silent partner in Abe's sufferings. Abe navigates a series of existential crises related to his decision to join, his experiences in Iraq (including Garcia's violent and sudden death), and his spiral of self destruction on his return home. Along the way, his identity is formed within an ongoing tension between two simultaneous and unfolding realities: 1) a growing alienation from the group (squad, platoon, and marine corps generally) and 2) a gradual realization that his friendship with Garcia contains the meaning he is looking for. This privileging of individual communion over institutional identity—indeed in defiance of and resistance to institutional identity—reflects the tension inherent in contemporary conceptions of community.

As Stanley Grenz has pointed out (2009), contemporary conceptions of community, and the conceptions of "church" that follow for Christians, bear these same tensions. Abe's resentment toward his community grows, yet it is the unwitting and unintentional source of his friendship with Garcia. Abe's journey becomes a kind of allegory of fall and redemption, where the depth of camaraderie is something that Abe is not prepared for and does not understand until it is gone, and his identity with it. Thus, Abe loses faith in the "church" of the corps. Of particular interest in this vein is an episode containing a mandatory and frustrating grief-counseling session with a chaplain. This oblivious clergyman fails to recognize the nature of Abe's conflict, and tries to help by providing stock-religious answers in an attempt to "convert" the clearly secular-minded Abe. To Abe, this encounter cheapens the very real communion experience he had in being Garcia's friend, and drives him to numb his pain with alcohol and push his family and friends away. But eventually the force of communion triumphs: the final panel of the graphic novel depicts Abe in

a kind of quasi-theophany, blinking in intoxicated bewilderment at the base of a small cross, the marker of Garcia's grave.

At no point is the religious imagery overt, and at no point does Abe "find religion" in the traditional sense. Rather, Uriarte seems to suggest that a secular-minded skeptic can find meaning in a meaningless world by a kind of participation in the Christian mythos, where rather than the friend being a metaphor for Christ, Christ is a metaphor for the friend. This brings a kind of immediacy to the mythos, as Uriarte creates the possibility for a kind of salvation being possible to any drunken, atheistic grunt home from a pointless war, as long as this kind of communion is honored in the moment and revered in memory.

**"The Wounded Healer: Art, Healing, and Spirituality"**

Marion Dumont, Ph.D., Independent Scholar

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**"The Grateful Dead, The Mark of the Beast, and the Religious Dimensions of Popular Music"**

Octavio Carrasco, Union Theological Seminary

This paper will explore the religious dimensions of popular music through the examples of the subculture around the Grateful Dead and the alternative ritual space of heavy metal music. In these two examples, music allows listeners and musicians to negotiate their existence as they struggle to come to terms "with the ultimate significance of [their] place in the world." By participating in these music scenes, fans are simultaneously ritually orienting themselves while performing who they understand themselves to be.

I will draw on Josh Kun's idea of "Audiotopia" which suggests that music creates "a possible utopia for the listener... a space we can enter into, encounter, move around in." In addition, Robin Sylvan's *Traces of the Spirit* claims, "the real power of popular music is spiritual and religious," noting the transformative power of music in people's lives and self-perceptions. Sylvan suggests that much of popular music's appeal rises from the traces of West African rhythms co-opted and incorporated in the popular music sphere.

Robert Sardiello's work on the secular rituals of Grateful Dead concerts and his claim that the "Deadheads" incorporate "totemic symbols" in the process of following the band is instructive. The Dead Head community is an engaged and embodied social organism with its own alternative norms and expectations, ultimately functioning along religious dimensions in its modern context. Taking part in the world of the Grateful Dead is a method for Dead Heads to interpret and enact their lives in meaningful ways.

In an equally important way, heavy metal functions in a religious fashion for fans as they engage the sounds, words, and associated experience in an effort to transform their lives. In *Rescripting the Sacred*, Santana and Erickson demonstrate the ways heavy metal provides a model for living, including "tenets of faith and empowerment, and comfort for when they don't work," as well as a connection with a power higher than one's self. At the same time, the lyrical content of heavy metal reimagines religious themes and images, not so much speaking to a hope for extra-bodily salvation, but rather to wrestling with the tension of existence until you can more meaningfully engage with it.

While recognizing that music is not all religion, or always religious, my goal is to explore the way people use music to make meaning of their lives.

**"(Con)Founding Theology: A Haptic Pneumatology for Contemporary Art"**

Chelle Stearns, The Seattle School of Theology and Psychology

This paper will argue that the work of American artist, Ann Hamilton, can heuristically elucidate Ben Quash's model for reading scripture and being the church in this current age. Quash begins his book, *Found Theology*, with the metaphor of a person carrying a well-stocked rucksack down a trail. The "given" of history is in the rucksack, and the path is where and how the human imagination engages and finds meaning. Thus, he argues, this path is the where the Holy Spirit invites humanity to "*relate the given to the found*." Similarly, Ann Hamilton begins her artistic process with specific "givens" (e.g., cloth, swings, or the body of regional animals) and then creates installations where participants are invited to explore and discover. Much like in Quash's model, meaning and interpretation happen at the intersection of the given and the found. There is inherent content within what is given in the installations (e.g., cloth requires the crossing of threads or that death is ever present) yet the veracity of the "found" is discernible only at the point of interaction with the found. Thus, what we learn from Hamilton is that the human imagination is made more open and receptive through participation and play. As Quash puts it, "the givens only come alive in this indefinitely extended series of encounters with new circumstances."

### **"Poets, Priests, and Prophets: The Unexpected Influence of African Poets on African Scholars of Religion"**

Sara Fretheim, Ph.D. Independent Researcher

An exploration of the influence of African poetry on African scholars of religion reveals a number of important links between the two, such that we see some poets functioning prophetically, raising key issues expanded upon by scholars of religion. Yet, this influence remains largely underestimated and overlooked.

In this paper, I will argue that one important example of the relationship between African poetry and the study of religion in Africa may be seen in twentieth-century Ghanaian scholar Kwame Bediako (1945–2008). Primarily known as a scholar of Christianity and Indigenous Religions in Africa, he is also remembered for establishing the Akrofi-Christaller Institute for Theology, Mission, and Culture. However, a lesser-known but essential aspect of Bediako's career is his study of Négritude literature. This period included his first Masters and Doctoral theses analyzing the poetry of Tchicaya U Tam'si, a French Congolese Surrealist poet. In-depth examination of these unpublished documents, read alongside of his later research, reveals that themes within U Tam'si's opus had a lasting influence on Bediako's Christian scholarship. The discovery that Négritude literature is an important source for Bediako's theology supports the argument that African literature functions as a critical voice within the study of religion in Africa.

While Bediako set aside his study of Négritude poetry in pursuit of theology, his commitment to finding inspiration for the study of religion within African poetry did not fade. He later turned his attention to the Ghanaian poet Madam Afua Kuma, whose oral poems, in the style of traditional Akan praise songs, provided a rich source for his theological thought.

Within this discussion, I will firstly introduce these poets and explore their differing voices: male and female; with one expressing himself in a colonial language and the other, her mother tongue; one writing as an African in Europe, the other, an African in her Ghanaian community; one who is highly educated, the other, an oral poet; one whose engagement with religion is a tense standoff between the Catholicism of the colonizer and lost indigenous traditions, the other, an African Pentecostal Christian fully at home within a religiously pluralistic milieu.

Building on this, I will then identify key areas of affinity between U Tam'si and Bediako, including a search for authentic African identity; the role of language; and creative interplay between Christianity and African indigenous religions. Finally, I will consider how quite opposite perspectives on these themes, found within Afua Kuma's poetry, helped to shape Bediako's later writing as well as his methodological approaches to studying African Christianity at the Akrofi-Christaller Institute.

In conclusion, this paper will demonstrate that important sources for the study of religion in Africa are found in African poetry; and that simultaneously, poetry is in itself a critical yet underexplored vehicle for wrestling with religious tensions within Africa's pluralistic, postcolonial context. In this way, Bediako as an African scholar of religion demonstrates that drawing from an unusual well – that of African poetry— proves to be a richly rewarding, if unexpected, source for the study of religion in Africa.

### **Asian and Comparative Studies**

#### **Atiśa's *Stages of the Path to Awakening*:**

#### **Analysis of a Manuscript in the History of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Path Literature**

James B. Apple, University of Calgary ([jbapple@ucalgary.ca](mailto:jbapple@ucalgary.ca))

This paper examines the structure and content of Atiśa's *Stages of the Path to Awakening*), a previously unstudied important work found among the recently published manuscript facsimiles of the *Collected Works of the Kadampas*. Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (ca. 982-1054), one of the great Indian Buddhist scholars during the first half of the eleventh century, is well known among both traditional Tibetan and modern scholars for his *A Lamp for the Path to Awakening* composed in Western Tibet for his Tibetan disciple Byang-chub 'od. *A Lamp for the Path to Awakening* is generally considered to be the prototype for all subsequent stages of the path literature in Tibetan scholastic history. In contrast, Atiśa's *Stages of the Path to Awakening* is virtually unknown to traditional and modern scholarship. This paper provides an initial examination of the structure and content of this important work and describes a number of small accompanying texts found within the 91 folio cursive script manuscript. The paper then compares the structure of Atiśa's *Stages of the Path to Awakening* to Atiśa's *Lamp for the Path to Awakening*. The paper also compares the structure of the *Stages of the Path to Awakening* to other comparable early Kadampa based path texts of Po-to-ba (1027-1105), Shar-ba-pa Yon-tan grags (1070-1141 c.e.), and Gro-lung-pa (12<sup>th</sup> century). This comparison illustrates that Atiśa's *Stages of the Path to Awakening* includes such topics as the rarity of human rebirth, the sufferings of cyclic existence, the principles of karma, among others, found in later stages of the path texts but absent from Atiśa's *Lamp for the Path to Awakening*. Atiśa's *Stages of the Path to Awakening* also concludes with instructions on the practice of quiescence (*śamatha*) and insight (*vipaśyanā*) rather than discussing Tantra as found in the *Lamp for the Path to Awakening*. Moreover, the instructions on insight in Atiśa's *Stages of the Path to Awakening* focuses on a non-conceptual direct vision of the emptiness of one's own mind, a significant difference from the analytical insight utilizing reasoning found in the *Lamp for the Path to Awakening*. The paper concludes that the *Stages of the Path to Awakening* was composed for Atiśa's close disciples within a context of teachings for individuals of highest capacity within the stages of the path approach. In its conclusion, the paper also suggests the historical conditions for why this important text by Atiśa was forgotten and not acknowledged by subsequent generations of Tibetan scholars.

#### **Spiritualizing the Internet: Online Buddhist Communities and the Sangha**

Rutika Gandhi, University of Lethbridge ([rutika.gandhi@uleth.ca](mailto:rutika.gandhi@uleth.ca))

Among many other developments, internet has also become a hub for religious social interactions. Buddhism, just like many other religions, plays a role in the media as well as in the cyberspace. Online communities, forums, virtual worlds, as well as social media have enabled practitioners from around the world to be part of a larger Buddhist community. The presence of a sacred space for Buddhists around the world also raises questions about authenticity and Buddhist identity. This paper explores the boundaries of Buddhist orthodoxy among the participants, as well as the role that the internet plays in conceptualizing the identity, authority, and the sangha in relation to traditional Buddhist practice. A closer analysis of these online communities also reveal the ways in which the availability of online sacred spaces allows the participants to practice Buddhism in ways that are not limited by geographical locations. Additionally, the shifting views of Buddhism and Buddhist identity, due to the presence of an online community, is explored.

## **Collective Consciences:**

### **The Catholic Church, Reconciliation and Post-Conflict processes in Sri Lanka**

Anupama Ranawana, Newman Theological College ([a.m.ranawana@outlook.com](mailto:a.m.ranawana@outlook.com))

In the depth and breadth of its reach, the Roman Catholic Church is, in itself, an extended, transnational, religious movement, as Peggy Levitt (2004) points out. Catholicity lives and breathes a sacramental worldview, one which connects the hearts and minds of its global faithful. Amongst these sacraments is the idea of individual penance, or, as it is now framed, the sacrament of reconciliation. Within modern thinking, such reconciliation focuses almost reductively on the subject, and on individual healing and repentance, without allowing for such an understanding to flow outwards towards a collective process. What occurs when we free such an act from an intense focus on the individual? In many of his speeches concerning global instances of violence, Pope Francis has called over and over again for global “reconciliation.” From the papal office such language is not used lightly but looks towards a profound examination of conscience and a culture of encounter. Reflecting on the current post-conflict process in Sri Lanka, this paper, then, analyses the understanding of reconciliation in Catholic perception, orienting this analysis towards what, the Catholic Church, as a transnational organization can offer towards post-conflict processes. In such cases, what is a collective examination of conscience?

### **Buddhist Forgiveness: Origins and Development**

Donna Brown, Maitripa College ([tsultrim.sangmo@gmail.com](mailto:tsultrim.sangmo@gmail.com))

A few years ago, I described a trauma I had experienced to a Tibetan lama. He responded, “You should forgive.” I was taken aback because the offender had not acknowledged his actions, apologized, righted the wrong, or asked for forgiveness. I wondered why the lama did not expect that. When Buddhists use the term “forgive” with reference to interpersonal wrongdoing, what *do* they mean? Do Asian Buddhist teachers mean the same thing as western ones? What concept in Asian Buddhism are they translating as “forgiveness”? Is there one, or did forgiveness enter Buddhism after its transmission to North America, and draw on western ideas rather than Asian ones? Forgiveness is now a common Buddhist teaching, but there is confusion about its meaning and application.

This paper seeks to answer these questions by examining the development of Buddhist teachings on forgiveness. Analyzing Pali and Sanskrit canonical sources reveals how the Buddha dealt with interpersonal wrongdoing: a confession/ regret/ repair-based model similar to Christian repentance. This was also what Tibetan Buddhist society lived by, for example, and what early Asian and western Buddhist teachers taught: there was no unilateral, unconditional forgiveness in the writings of Asian or western Buddhist teachers in the early decades of transmission. However, in the 1980s, forgiveness in western culture came to be reinvented in the popular mind as merely an attitude of letting go, non-anger, and benevolence in victims, with no accountability for wrongdoers: no repentance. This shift occurred largely via evangelical Christianity and the self-help movement, and spread into psychology. American Buddhism, closely connected to psychology, adopted this modernized understanding of forgiveness even though there was no corresponding concept found in Buddhism.

An analysis of popular Buddhist books from the 1970s to the present (the “new canon” of western Buddhism including the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Joseph Goldstein, Jack Kornfield, Pema Chodron, Thanissaro Bhikkhu, Charlotte Joko Beck, and others) shows that, as forgiveness spread through Buddhism, differences arose. Even teachers within the same Buddhist school have differed, not just on how to generate an attitude of forgiveness but also on how to resolve wrongdoing. These variations appear to have occurred because teachers have been unable to base their teachings on canonical Buddhist texts and thus have improvised. The final stage of this improvisation has been to start translating the Buddhist terms *kshanti* (Skt.), *kshama* (Pali), and *zöpa* (Tib.), normally rendered as patience, forbearance, or fortitude, as forgiveness, thus “finding” forgiveness in the traditional canon and giving it a Buddhist lineage, although not all scholars and teachers have taken this step.



The paper traces these developments, examining canonical Buddhist texts, Tibetan society in practice, early works on Buddhism in English, and key modern Buddhist works. It ends with some suggestions on how reincorporate canonical teachings in order to make “Buddhist forgiveness” a more relational and embodied concept – as well as more “Buddhist.”

### **Contrasting Approaches of the Buddha and Jesus:**

#### **A Comparative Analysis of their Teachings**

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The Buddha and Jesus offer contrasting styles to reach the same goal, viz., *nirvana* or liberation. The Buddha’s approach is relatively passive with its emphasis on the elimination of ignorance and subsidence of mental disturbances. In stark contrast, Jesus pursued an active approach where the seeker is exhorted to deliberately venture into the unknown, respond positively to adversarial inputs in human interactions, and realize the “truth that liberates.”

The teachings of Jesus and the Buddha are built on the foundation of respective precepts, viz., Ten Commandments and *sila*, respectively. Precepts are to the mind what hygiene is to the body. They are prophylactic measures to maintain a healthy mind. Precepts are learned through reinforcement and remembering.

The Buddha’s path is slow but safe. In scientific language, the Buddha’s approach is analogous to passivity-based control of dynamical systems. He viewed suffering as a symptom of mental afflictions caused by ignorance or false perceptions of reality. The objective of his eight-fold Noble Path is to eliminate ignorance, end suffering, and realize *nirvana*. His teachings call for a compassionate approach towards all living beings. Since it is difficult to practice his teachings in the market place where adversarial social orders tend to evoke large mental disturbances, he introduced the *Sangha*, a monastic set up to guide earnest seekers in a relatively safe and tranquil environment. The Buddha introduced three important concepts of reality: *anatta*, *shunyata*, and *nirvana*. All of them refer to zero: *anatta* refers to no-self; *shunyata* literally means zero; and *nirvana* is the cessation of the self-image. Amazingly, as in mathematics where zero is coupled to infinity in a paradoxical manner, cessation of the self exposes the seeker to the nature of infinite reality.

Jesus’ approach to liberation is simpler and more direct. He beseeched his disciples to meet adversity head-on with a positive attitude. His approach is similar to modern active control of dynamical systems with positive feedback. His teachings lead to a steep learning curve that is at once the swiftest but also the riskiest path to liberation. He evidently had immense faith in the innate intelligence of human beings (what Richard Dawkins might call the “selfish gene”) to find the right solution in a compassionate manner when faced with adversity. He also emphasized the importance of practicing his teachings when he observed at the end of his sermons that those who heard his teachings and practiced what they heard were like a person who builds a house on rock. It would withstand strong winds and floods. Those who heard him but did not practice what they heard would be like a person who builds house on sand. It would fall in the presence of wind and flood and the destruction would be great. An unconventional interpretation of the teachings of the Buddha and Jesus and their relevance to the contemporary world will be presented.

### **Permissible Matricide: Two Episodes from the Sanskrit Epic Mahabharata**

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The epic *Mahabharata* describes two episodes where a rishi orders his son to cut off the head of his mother. In the first one, Rishi Jamadagni is angry at his wife Renuka. He suspects her of a sexual misconduct when she had gone out for her morning ablutions. He orders his eldest son to kill her. The son, completely shocked, could not act. Jamadagni then asks his other two sons but they too, utterly bewildered, could not carry out his order. He curses all three of them and then asks his youngest son

Parasurama to kill his mother. Parasurama takes his axe and kills her. The rishi is pleased and offers him any boon he wanted. Parasurama asks for the revival of his mother and three brothers and a long life for himself. These boons are granted.

The second story deals with rishi Gautama and his son Chirakarin. Chirakarin never acts in haste. He always deliberates for a long time before taking any action. One day, Gautama suspects that his wife Ahalya has been unfaithful and, in a fit of rage, asks Chirakarin to kill his mother. Then he leaves. Unlike Parasurama, Chirakarin debates whether he should obey his father and kill his own mother or whether he should disobey the order and avoid matricide. He decides to wait till his father returns and then explain to him why he did not act. The rishi returns after some time and, by then, he too had been deliberating on his hasty order and feels that his wife should not die. When he reaches home he is very happy to see that his son, following his usual practice, had delayed any action. He forgives his wife and his son.

It is extraordinary that a rishi would order his son to commit matricide which, according to all the sastras, is a heinous sin. Why then have these two stories been included in the epic? There has to be some important point the epic wants to make and some powerful message it wants to convey. This paper tries to analyze the stories to see what points are made and messages conveyed.

### **Phenomenological Yoga: An Husserlian Approach to *Samādhi* in Patañjali's *Yogasūtra***

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Patañjali's *Yogasūtra* (YS), a ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE Sanskrit text on the theory and practice of yoga, presents some interesting challenges for scholars who would approach it as a philosophical work. While one can readily translate much of its subject matter into the terms of European philosophy, the text's discussion of *samādhi*, or a state of meditative absorption, is more difficult to analogize with terms from the Western philosophical tradition. Consequently, *samādhi* can easily fall to the margins of comparative philosophical approaches to the YS, as a kind of transrational, or perhaps simply irrational, *terra incognita* for modern, Western interpreters.

This paper, however, will propose that the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) can provide a helpful analogue for *samādhi*, particularly the YS's description of *samprajñāta samādhi*, or the variety of *samādhi* involving the cognition of an intentional object. This paper will briefly explore how Husserl's phenomenological reduction can provide an interpretive counterpart for understanding what *samādhi* is in general. It will then go on to bring Husserl's idea of *Konstitution*, or the manners in which manifold appearances in pure experience cohere as the presentation of a single intentional object, into comparison with the insight said to be gained by the *yogin* through the practice of *samprajñāta samādhi*. Of particular interest will be the *yogin*'s recognition of *vikalpa*, often translated as "imagination" or "predication," while in *samādhi*. I will argue that *vikalpa* as it appears in the YS could represent a concept that is similar to Husserl's idea of constitution, in that both involve the coherence of a manifold of perceptual moments into a larger noematic unity. Through such a comparison, I will thus attempt to show that the YS's descriptions of *samprajñāta samādhi* could be an attempt to discern the structures by which intentional objects meaningfully appear in lived experience—in a spirit akin to Husserl's phenomenology—rather than an account of a nearly inscrutable altered state beyond the realm of philosophical discourse. Finally, I will briefly consider how an interpretation of *samprajñāta samādhi* as phenomenological could cohere with the larger soteriological goals of the YS, while also pointing out some key points of divergence of the YS from Husserl's philosophy.

### **Toward a Hindu Philosophical Hermeneutics**

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Whereas one can trace a more or less contiguous development of modern Western hermeneutic thought from its biblical and classical roots to Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger and onwards to Gadamer, Ricoeur and their contemporaries, such a trajectory is much more difficult to identify for Hindu religious traditions. Prima facie, the much greater diversity of Hinduism militates against the idea that

there are common hermeneutic theories and practices at work in these traditions, however I will argue that an axiomatic analysis of the orthodox *pramanas* reveals a coherent Hindu hermeneutic tradition, based in a paraconsistent logic and developed through grammarian and Vedantic traditions. This hermeneutics finds expression in, for example, the doctrine of *syadvada* and, I venture, may help to explain some vexing social questions in modern Indian society. My paper will outline this hermeneutic theory, making comparisons to the phenomenological tradition of contemporary Western hermeneutics in the process.

### **Yongjue Yanxian's *Nonsense Uttered in Dreams* and Syncretism of the Three Teachings**

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The 17th century Caodong Chan Master and prolific writer, Yongjue Yuanxian composed the *Nonsense Uttered in Dreams* or *Yiyan* to express his thoughts regarding Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. The founder of the Ming dynasty encouraged syncretism of these three teachings. Wang Yangming's Neo-Confucian School of Mind stimulated studies of Chan Buddhism among the later Neo-Confucians. The syncretism of the Three Teachings was a prevailing practice during the late Ming period.

Comparison of the characteristics of syncretism between the famous pre-Ming Buddhist masters and the Four Great Ming Chan Masters to those of Yuanxian show they were dissimilar to his even though they all embraced harmonization of the Three Teachings. I argue that Yuanxian's *Nonsense Uttered in Dreams* manifests his disagreement with the current trend of harmonizing the Three Teachings. On other occasions he criticized "mad Chan" which was a product of left wing Neo-Confucianism and a byproduct of the syncretism of the Three Teachings. Yuanxian saw the causes of decline in Chan Buddhism and had his eyes on regenerating the authentic Chan teachings and rectifying the unorthodox Chan practice of the late Ming. As a dharma protector, he stood against the currents of his time and criticized iconoclastic Chan cultivation through his writings and teachings.

Investigating Yuanxian's perspective towards the integration of the Three Teachings would be an effective step towards scrutinizing Yuanxian's sophisticated thoughts and would allow greater insight into the Chan Buddhism of the late Ming period.

### **Hebrew Bible**

#### **Challenges in Repatriating Refugees: Lessons from Ezra-Nehemiah**

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Ezra-Nehemiah is the story of exiles returning to their ancestral land. Historically the events cluster around two eras, each of which spans approximately a quarter century: (1) the activities of the earliest arrivals from Babylon (Ezra 1-6: 538-515 BCE); and (2) the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah (Ezra 7-Nehemiah 13: 458-432 BCE). The binding force for the complete work is preoccupation with personal and national identity: "Who are the genuine citizens of Yehud?" In terms of heritage, the question is "What clans comprise the authentic Israel in the post-exilic era?" The author wrote the Ezra-Nehemiah compendium around 300 BCE in order to assert that the families of Benjamin and Judah—along with the Levites—who returned from exile, are the legitimate heirs to the mantle of the Israelites as the true descendants of Abraham who originally had settled in the land under Joshua.

However, the portrayal of resettlement in the land is anything but idyllic in Ezra-Nehemiah. The story depicts the exiles as seizing control over the ancestral territory by gaining the favor of the highest echelons of power in the Achaemenid administration. (The first wave of returnees was sent home by the decree of Cyrus, while both Ezra and Nehemiah act as emissaries of Artaxerxes.) Each major portion of the compendium describes the disenfranchisement of the residents who had been in the land for the duration of the exile (587-538 BCE). The first waves of returnees refuse to partner with "the people of the land" in rebuilding the temple (Ezra 4:1-5). Ezra banishes from the community the women of non-

Judahite ancestry and their children who had been fathered by Judahite men (9:1-10:44). Nehemiah opposes Saballat the Hornite, Tobiah the Ammonite and Geshem the Arab (Neh 2:19; cf. 13:4-9, 28-29).

By reading against the grain of the Ezra-Nehemiah narrative, one can discern the disruption that the people of the land and the Samaritans had experienced due to the influx of the exiles, who had returned from Babylon and set about seizing power in Yehud.

This paper will point out features of the Ezra-Nehemiah story that are relevant to the drama of refugees in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We live in a world where 65,000,000 people have been forced to abandon their homes due to war and climate change. Geopolitical forces and universal access to social media propel their movements in this era of globalization. What experience awaits refugees who return to their countries either by force of circumstances or by their own will? As a story of the resettlement of exiles in an era of incipient globalization under the aegis of the Persian Empire, Ezra-Nehemiah can contribute a biblical perspective on some vital issues of social dislocation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This paper suggests that refugee studies in the Hebrew Bible are vital to the period in history in which we now live.

### **Another Look at the Textual Editions of Exodus 35–40: Is there Still no Tenable Solution to this Textual Discrepancy?**

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The account of the construction of the Tabernacle in Exodus 35–40 constitutes one of the greatest textual problems in the Pentateuch. In Exodus 25–31, Moses receives the instructions for the construction of the Tabernacle, and then after a pause in the Tabernacle construction (the notorious golden calf fiasco and the subsequent second giving of the law in Exodus 32–34), the construction of the Tabernacle is described in Exodus 35–40. If this study were solely concerned with the differences in the MT between the instructions received by Moses in Ex 25–31 and the carrying out of those instructions in Ex 35–40, it would be difficult enough. But add the fact that the LXX edition differs significantly from the MT in Ex 35–40 by presenting a shorter and differently arranged account, the complexity increases. In the Pentateuch, this particular departure from the MT by the LXX is quite unprecedented. Typically, the LXX offers a good and close rendition when compared to the MT suggesting that its *Vorlage* is very close to the MT's. Consequently, the question here is: *Why is the LXX's Ex 35–40 edition of the Tabernacle's construction so different from the MT's?*

### **Noah, The Builder: The Flood Hero in the Line of Fabricators**

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Noah is the biblical flood hero, and the fabrication of the life-saving vessel notwithstanding. This building aspect of Noah is suggestive when viewed alongside other manufacturers in the line of Cain (Gen 4\*), with their tools and instruments. The so-called ark (*tēbâ*) of Noah can, moreover, be seen to prefigure the tabernacle, as a divinely blueprinted sanctuary, and, by extension, the temple. The ark as a utopic structure, amidst the dystopic events surrounding it, is portrayed most poignantly in the Priestly stratum, with P's predilection for ideological and theological interpretations and assertions. The post/non-Priestly stratum augments the motif of the builder in Noah and Genesis generally. Further, the (composite) builder motif and the conclusion to the flood events, reveals a polemic against other ancient Near Eastern temples as for example in *Enuma Elish* and the Baal Cycle; of importance, specifically, is the window as a predominant feature to the structure. One aim of the Genesis flood narrative, it is argued, is to portray Noah, retrospectively, as a temple builder, and the Deity as one who is not threatened by the chaotic and chthonic floodwaters after the defeat of the latter by the former—a marked contrast to the Levantine accounts.

### **Mute and Mutilated: Understanding Judges 19-21 as a מַשַּׁל of Dialogue**

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There is a story at the end of Judges that has been described as “depicting the horror of male power, brutality and triumphalism, of female helplessness, abuse and annihilation.”<sup>1</sup> Baker describes it as a “grisly metaphor.”<sup>2</sup> Buber coins it a “political declaration.”<sup>3</sup> Stone declares it a “scandalous narrative.”<sup>4</sup> There is no “organic” connection to the previous chapters.<sup>5</sup> It has been described as a *homeless* piece of literature in Judges.<sup>5</sup> Judges 19-21 has also been labeled a “fictional account” and a “comic resolution.”<sup>6</sup> In a more neutral vein, Judges 19-21<sup>7</sup> is described as “fragmentary” and basically an “appendix” or “appendage.” *The silence of the mute and mutilated concubine leaves the reader offended and often unable to thoughtfully engage these three chapters.* How can we speak about this awkward addendum, this abusive text? In this paper I will argue that we can move beyond trauma to speaking about this text if we read it as a profoundly intertextual example of the genre מִשְׁל: a very pregnant Hebrew term. As מִשְׁל, this story marks an integral chapter in Israel’s theologico-political story of becoming; its threshold of transition. The end is not *finalized*. Through genre, this מִשְׁל (*proverb, parable*) of Judges 19-21 may find a place to call home.

### **Lady Wisdom and the Threshing Floor: Reading Between the Sheets in Ruth 3:1-6**

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This paper considers the intertextual relationship that obtains between the biblical books of Ruth and Proverbs, with special attention being given to the manner in which Naomi’s speech in Ruth 3:1-4 appropriates and subverts the vision of masculine wisdom constructed in the latter work. I begin by locating Proverbs’ portrayal of personified (and feminine) Wisdom and Folly in relation to the larger didactic macrostructure of masculine father-son instruction that undergirds chs. 1-9. To this end, I note that although both Wisdom and Folly are ostensibly feminine figures, these chapters, through the careful manipulation of speaking roles, encourage hearers/readers to identify the character of Lady Wisdom with the father figure himself; by contrast, the sexually promiscuous Folly, who alone of the pair is not permitted an autonomous voice of her own within the text, is construed by virtue of her lack of discursive independence as in opposition to the father and, therefore, as providing teachings that are necessarily illegitimate. Following from this initial discussion, I turn to an examination of Ruth 3:1-6, highlighting

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<sup>1</sup> Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 65.

<sup>2</sup> Robin Baker, *Hollow Men Strange Women: Riddles, Codes and Otherness in the Book of Judges*, (Leiden: BRILL, 2016), 6. J.J. Collins called it a “grisly climax” in the *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Martin Buber, *Kingship of God* (New York: Humanity Books, 1967), 77-78. Buber also highlights a misinterpretation in that “the act of unity at the beginning of the twentieth chapter in no way justifies the conception that what is involved here is a ‘churchly’ unity which was projected back from the post-exilic situation in the early period.” See also Footnote 52 on this section as the idea originates with J. Wellhausen, 82.

<sup>4</sup> Lawson Stone, “Book of Judges” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Historical Books* (Illinois: IVP 2005), 602.

<sup>5</sup> DOTHB, 595

<sup>5</sup> There is “no agreement on the literary home of chapters 17-21.” Daniel Block, *Judges, Ruth* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1999), 56.

<sup>6</sup> Boling, Robert “In those Days there was no king in Israel” in *A Light Unto My Path: Old Testament Studies in Jacob M. Honor of Myers*, edited by Howard M. Bream, et al., 33-48. Gettysburg Theological Studies (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), 43.

<sup>7</sup> Judges 17-18 is part of the epilogue of Judges but the intentional anonymity and mute silence of the key figures in the narrative in Judges 19-21 reveals that this second epilogue is a unique genre in its own right.

therein the inclusion of familial language that directly mimics the rhetoric of the father's own speeches in Prov 1-9. Of specific interest in this regard is Naomi's use of *bittî* ("my daughter") when addressing her daughter-in-law Ruth, a lexical item that, inasmuch as it evokes the recurrent refrain of *b'ēnî* ("my son") that marks the intended male hearer/reader of Prov 1-9, attunes perceptive hearers/readers to Ruth's implicit position as the recipient of authoritative instruction vis-à-vis Naomi's role as a sapiential teacher. In this manner, whereas Prov 1-9 attributes assertive female sexuality to the negative character of Folly, by presenting herself as a parental speaker whose discursive structure comports with the broader sapiential imaginary, Naomi assumes the literary position of Lady Wisdom herself; the effect being that Naomi's overtly erotic instructions to her daughter-in-law in Ruth 3:1-4 are infused with an intrinsic legitimacy that contrasts with the illegitimacy ascribed to such actions in Proverbs. Given both the climactic description of Ruth's obedience to Naomi's directives as an instance of covenant fidelity (*ḥesed*) in v. 3:10 as well as YHWH's later blessing of Naomi with a child through Ruth in vv. 4:13-17, I contend that such a reading of Naomi's speech is confirmed by the literary and theological trajectory of the book as a whole. On the basis of this intertextual analysis, I am able to suggest that not only does Ruth 3:1-6 subvert the masculine rhetoric of Prov 1-9 through its construction of Naomi as an independent female source of instruction, but it further serves to establish a vision for the use of sexually transgressive behavior as a means of achieving redemptive ends.

#### **Mapping Sinai: Corpus Linguistics and Biblical Law**

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While metaphor is often assumed to be the stuff of poetry, the field of cognitive linguistics opens up new avenues for tracing the shaping power of metaphor in other genres. Biblical scholars have drawn upon the insights of cognitive linguists for work in narrative and poetic texts (e.g., Andrea Weiss, *Figurative Language in Biblical Prose Narrative: Metaphor in the Book of Samuel*, VTSupp 107, Leiden: Brill Academic, 2006; Marc Zvi Brettler, *God is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor*, LHBOTS 76, New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2009; Job J. Jindo, *Biblical Metaphor Reconsidered: A Cognitive Approach to Poetic Prophecy in Jeremiah 1–24*, HSM, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), but very few have applied this methodology to biblical law (an exception is Joseph Lam, *Patterns of Sin in the Hebrew Bible: Metaphor, Culture, and the Making of a Religious Concept*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). This paper will offer a preliminary taxonomy for categories of conceptual metaphor as they appear in the Decalogue and the Covenant Code. Attention to these metaphorical concepts not only enhances our understanding of biblical instructional material; in some cases a law cannot be properly interpreted without reference to its metaphorical underpinnings. Several such examples will be highlighted, most significantly Exod 20:7, where the underlying metaphorical concept is usually overlooked. This command is directed to the Israelites as bearers of YHWH's name, selected from among the nations. They are not to "bear/carry his name in vain," that is, in a way unbecoming those who belong to YHWH. This alternative reading of Exod 20:7 is strengthened by the ubiquity of other conceptual metaphors present in biblical law and by linguistic evidence of this concept in other settings.

#### **Social Aspects of Canonizing Literati in the early Second Temple Period: Exploring the Contributions of Some Potential Intersections and Dialogues between Research Frames Informed by Social-Memory and 'Bourdieuian' Approaches/Concepts**

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As per title, this paper explores what some intersections and dialogues between these research frames might contribute to the study of social aspects of the canonizing literati of the late Persian/Early Hellenist Period. Particular attention would be given to issues of 'cultural capital,' 'memory capital,' habitus, social mindscape, taste, grammars of preference, literatidicy (as a form of sociodicy), power, Temple controls and the possibility of effecting social change, and the related matter of social reproduction, and the implications of convergences between these research frames.

### **Between Two Worlds: The Functional and Symbolic Significance of the High Priestly Regalia**

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The detailed descriptions of the clothing prescribed for Aaron and his sons in Exodus 28 dwarf any other description of clothing in the Hebrew Bible. This paper assembles what can be known about these garments, comparing them with royal, priestly, and cultic garments of other ANE cultures, and considering the ritual occasion on which Aaron was first qualified to wear them as well as the ongoing rituals which he was thereby eligible to oversee. In so doing it draws on exegetical, archaeological, and ritual studies to demonstrate that Aaron's garments uniquely qualified him for his role as cultic intermediary between the Israelite nation and their God, YHWH. Aaron represented YHWH to Israel and Israel to YHWH, a reality elucidated by the design of his garments and the occasions on which he wore or did not wear them. The significance of the high priestly regalia thereby extended beyond Aaron's particular cultic duties and became constitutive of his role as representative of both parties.

### **Apotropaic Accessories: Tassels and Phylacteries, Arm-bands and Veils**

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Given that the adornments of garments are often just as significant, if not more so, than the garments themselves, this paper examines some ancient near Eastern accessories found in the Hebrew Bible. Of particular interest herein are the potential prophylactic and apotropaic properties of certain paraphernalia, and their cultural and religious role and import both in Israel and the Levant. The accessories investigated are the tassels (Num 15:37-41), phylacteries (Deut 6:4-9; 11:18-21), and arm-bands and veils (Ezek 13:17-23). It is argued these accoutrements did possess qualified apotropaic qualities in order to avert evil and thereby remain faithful to the covenant, albeit this takes multivalent expression in scripture.

### **The Emperor and His Clothing: David Robed and Unrobed before the Ark and Michal**

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The story of David dancing before the Ark as it enters Jerusalem has two distinct versions: one in 2 Samuel 6 and the other in 1 Chronicles 15. Second Samuel 6:14 states that David—wearing a “linen ephod” (some kind of priestly garment; cf. 1 Sam 2:18; 22:18)—“whirled with all his might” before the Ark. Michal despises David for this behavior (2 Sam 6:16), and she chastises him for it, claiming that he exposed himself “as one of the riffraff might expose himself” (2 Sam 6:20). Michal thus condemns David's dancing but also his *clothing* (or lack thereof). David seems to have dressed down for the party. In 1 Chr 15:27, however, David is “wrapped in robes of fine linen” in addition to his priestly ephod. The narrative in Chronicles, too, highlights Michal's distaste for David's whirling about (1 Chr 15:29), but it does *not* recount Michal's comments about indecent exposure. David's state of dress is a conspicuous difference in the versions, a difference which impacts potential readings of the narrative. Moreover, this is the only place in Chronicles where Michal makes an appearance—an issue commentators often puzzle over. In Samuel she is a key element in plot development, but in Chronicles she is simply mentioned off the cuff, so to speak. In the account of David's bringing the Ark into Jerusalem, then, we have an exemplary case study for examining both the import of clothing in Judean historiographical narrative and the discursive relationship between Samuel and Chronicles. In my paper, drawing on concepts of social memory and “forgetting,” I will argue that Judean readers of these texts partially warranted Michal's distaste for David's dressing down, and I hope also to demonstrate how such an approach gives us a better understanding of how these two historiographical texts (Samuel and Chronicles) functioned in their ancient Judean milieu.

### **The Portrayal of Saul and His Clothes/Armor in 1 Samuel**

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One of the unique features of the book of 1 Samuel is a significant emphasis placed on clothing and the appearance of individuals. From the many references to Samuel's robe or Saul's (even David and Jonathan's) armor to the garments of Israel's priests, it is not difficult to see that clothing and appearance plays a role in the telling of these stories. Given all of this, I would like to explore the particular use and function of Saul's clothing including his battle garments within 1 Samuel. In this paper I will show how Saul's appearance and particularly his clothing is an important means by which our author helps us as readers understand not only how he is portrayed, but furthermore why he is rejected so quickly as Israel's first king. The results of this analysis will also reveal a number of implications for wider discussions concerning the book of Samuel within the Deuteronomistic History.

### **Were YHWH's Clothes Worth Remembering and Thinking About among the Literati of Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Judah/Yehud? Observations and Considerations**

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This paper addresses the fact there seems to be not much in the world of memory and imagination of these literati about YHWH's garments, compares this dis-preference with similar dis-preferences and explores potential reasons for it.

### **Nakedness, Shame, and the Presence of God: an exegetical exploration of Genesis 2:25**

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Genesis 2:25 has been read throughout history with a sexual slant. The two main proponents of views are Irenaeus and Augustine. The former argues that 2:25 conveys a childlike innocence; that is, a prepubescent state. The argument continues that 3:7 is an awakening or new awareness of sexuality upon receiving knowledge of good and evil.<sup>8</sup>

The latter argues that in 2:25 the man and woman were naked and yet without shame because "they did not perceive in their members any law at war with the law of their mind."<sup>9</sup> The law was given after their transgression, which then caused a war between the law and their mind. Some say he is referring to a state of righteousness; it can be argued that he seems to be alluding to a sort of sexual freedom.

While both these renowned theologians' interpretations have been supported over the centuries, this paper has been pursued to see if 2:25 says something different. This paper's exploration of Genesis 2:25 argues the following thesis: In the presence of God man and woman lacked nothing and were able to fulfill their role as priests by honoring God, and in so doing received honor and stability as a gift from God in their position and standing before Him, hence *naked but not ashamed*. The paper will involve grammatical, lexical, historical, and biblical research, with a conclusion that considers the findings in light of the New Testament, albeit briefly.

### **Why Not Drink from the Nile? Historical and Cultural Perspectives on Jeremianic Egyptophobia**

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<sup>8</sup> We see the argument best articulated in Bouteneff's statement: "And what Adam did—partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil—was something we are all meant to do anyway. Adam did it ahead of this time, in his God-endowed freedom and in childlike innocence. The pathos of human disobedience remains, but the primary blame rests with the devil (*AH*, 4.40.3; 3.23.3; *Dem.* 16), and the outcome is very much part of the divine plan for the human person's union with God." Peter. Bouteneff, *Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008), 84–85.

<sup>9</sup> Augustine: Found in John Hammond Taylor trans., *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, vol. 41-42, *Ancient Christian Writers* (New York, N.Y.: Newman Press, 1982), 135.



During the sixth century BCE, Egypt provided asylum to Judaeans living under the domination of the Neo-Babylonian empire. The book of Jeremiah, however, rejects Egypt as a place of haven, condemns those who flee there, and forecasts Egypt's defeat by Nebuchadnezzar on African soil. Scholars have thoroughly considered the political debates between pro-Babylonian and pro-Egyptian factions in late monarchic Judah, though no study has specifically addressed the literary and ideological repercussions of Judaeans' anti-Egypt sentiment. Recent studies engaging Pohlmann's 1978 theory of a no-longer extant "exile edition" of Jeremiah account for rhetorical vitriol directed against Judaeans settled in Egypt, but the negativity towards Egypt itself remains unexplored.

This essay (1) correlates Egypt-ward antagonisms in Jeremiah with salient historical events from the late-seventh to mid-sixth centuries BCE (i.e., during the period of the 26th/Saite Dynasty) and (2) uncovers Egypt's symbolic role within the cultural/ideological matrix that is the book of Jeremiah. The literary tradition curated within Jeremiah partakes of a deuteronomistic theology according to which Jerusalem's fall to Babylonian forces resulted from Judah's covenant infidelity. In this theological interpretation of events, Nebuchadnezzar's campaign represents the execution of Yhwh's justice, and those who oppose the Mesopotamian empire oppose the rule of Yhwh himself. Egypt, as Babylon's imperial competitor and haven of Judaeans' renegades, becomes in Jeremiah a country set against Yhwh. Jeremiah memorializes past and anticipates future Egyptian calamity, perhaps lest a prosperous Egypt destabilize the tradition's symbol-network and the political predictability it might have afforded ancient scribes.

#### **Laying Methodological Foundations for Retelling a Story of YHWH: Cultural Translation and Subversive Reception through Israelite History**

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This paper explores some potential approaches to study the different expressions of YHWHism throughout Israelite history, while being aware of the complexities with such a task. By identifying common responses to historical pressures that changed expressions of divinity throughout Israelite history, while being attentive to how ancient Israelites expressed divinity within a broader cultural matrix, a broad study might identify how changes to divinity commonly occur over a larger data set, if guided by two lenses: *cultural translation* and *subversive reception*. The times when Israel translates expressions of divinity from other nations, is matched by a subversive reception of those ideas; ideas are expressed in a common matrix but at the same time are re-expressed to respond to external threats while solidifying Israelite identity. Analyzing already well-known textual, inscriptional, and material data for YHWH across a broad chronology, combined with isolating particular expressions in their most reasonable contexts and proposing the historical motivators behind them, and tracing their origins in other cultures through the lenses of *cultural translation* and *subversive reception*, each build the essential pieces for a historically informed systematic proposal of YHWH's story from its earliest expressions in 1200 BCE until the Persian period in 332 BCE. This paper focuses on how *cultural translation* and *subversive reception* might provide a helpful lens for identifying common changes in YHWH's divinity that takes account of comparative data in the ANE, simultaneously attending to changes in the expressions YHWH due to do historical circumstances, and isolates a few biblical texts to begin exploring these possibilities.

#### **When Amarnites and Qedarites straddled the Red Sea: Understanding the Vedic Roots of Judaism**

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Amarnath and Kedarnath, separated by a distance of 300 miles, represent two immortal Shrines of Lord Shiva in India on the edge of the Himalayas. 3300 years ago, in Egypt King Amenhotep IV (Akhenathan) built the city of Amarna. The Amarna Letters show various correspondence between Tushratha, Mitanni king to Akhenathan, Pharaoh, and Tiye. and Queen of Egypt often filial and personal. Rig Veda 10:37 has

parallels with Akhenathan's Psalms and poetry. On the other side of the Red Sea, in NorthWest Arabia, the "Princes of Kedar", the Children of Ishmael, ruled what Isaiah called "the splendor of Kedar".

Modern Scholarship looks to this time and wonders about how the Amarnites and Qedarites became early Monotheistic believers and evolved into the modern religious beliefs like Islam, Christianity and Judaism, from the many city states with Henotheistic Pantheons. The Documentary Hypothesis postulates that the Jahwist brought Monotheism to the Bible from what were earlier polytheistic beliefs of the Pre-Jahwist. The morphing of Canaanite faith to one with One God under One United Nation with One Temple in Jerusalem has irrevocably changed World Religion. Yet, its earliest roots were polytheistic with "burnt offerings" and weapons named "YaagRishi". It tells of Goddess Asherah, in whose image there arose the barren Sarah, an echo of the land where the Saraswati had dried. Even after Her Vinassana, or disappearance, She would give rise to another nation formed in the Image of Bharata.

### **Recovering the Symbolic Structure of Torah—A Tale of Two Paradigms**

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Just over fifty years ago Mary Douglas (1921-2007) challenged biblical scholars with her claim in *Purity and Danger* (1966) that the classification of clean and unclean animals in Lev. 11 and Deut. 14 indicated a highly ordered symbolic system informed Hebrew purity rules and biblical social organization. While at first Douglas expected the system to be easily deciphered, the more she learned about the Hebrew rules, the more they baffled her—frustrating her hierarchically biased cross-cultural expectations. Near the end of her professional life she reversed herself, asserting Hebrew purity was in fact an anomaly—it looked like a highly ordered and socially significant symbolic system, but it was not.

This paper identifies three obstacles that impeded Douglas and which continue to hinder scholars regarding her initial claim that a highly ordered symbolic system informs Torah and its rules. The first is an inadequate understanding of symbolic systems and symbolic structure as these relate to purity rules. Not all symbolic systems with related purity rules are hierarchical. The second obstacle is a tendency among scholars to view purity in relation to temple sanctity. Hebrew purity rules existed long before the advent of temples and have survived for millennia without them. Finally, the most tenacious impediment of all is paradigm blindness—we have failed to fully consider the influence of binary thinking in our reading of biblical texts. Although the premonarchic social and symbolic paradigm of Israel survived the transition to monarchy, it faltered when exile, end of monarchy, and temple destruction re-ordered public and domestic social relations. Even as written Torah preserved preexilic rules, rites, and texts, a binary paradigm emerged in response to social upheaval and compression. When viewed from the perspective of binary thinking, the classification of clean and unclean animals, once key to understanding preexilic social structure, became unintelligible—an essentially arbitrary yet divinely mandated and beneficial spiritual discipline.

### **History of Christianity and North American Religions**

#### **Truth and Reconciliation: How do we reconcile?**

**Dr. Michael Lickers** is a well-known Mohawk educator from Six Nations of the Grand River. Michael is a Senior Advisor of Indigenous Relations for Suncor Energy. Founder and past Executive Director of the Ghost River Rediscovery program, Michael has over 30 years of experience in leadership, outdoor education, community development and youth leadership development, and International cross cultural education. Michael has a Masters in Leadership and Training and Doctorate of Social Sciences from Royal Roads University with a focus on Indigenous Youth Leadership Development. Michael has taught "Canadian Aboriginal Issues" and "Indigenous Ways of Knowing" and "History of Education: Residential Schools in Canada" at the University of Calgary and "Indigenous Knowledge camp" at St Mary's University College. Michael is author of "Urban Aboriginal Leadership: The Delicate Dance Between Two Worlds",

and has published articles on youth leadership, international youth programs, and community development.

**Casey Eagle Speaker** is also known by his traditional name “Sorrel Horse” by his people within the Blackfoot Confederation. He is a member of the Blood Tribe in Southern Alberta. Casey provides a wide array of presentations and workshops in the greater Calgary area and abroad, in respect to one’s journey to wellness and understanding of one’s identity and belonging. In the Year 2000, Casey was awarded the Chief David Crow Child Award from the City of Calgary for his work in cross-cultural awareness and in addition the Dr. Joseph Crow Shoe Award from the University of Calgary for his work within society. Casey has served on several boards such as the Native Women’s Shelter, 4 directions Foster Parents Association, Ghost River rediscovery, Alberta association of Services for Children and Families. The AHS Wisdom Council and a number of other communities. He is also deeply involved in the spiritual practices of his people and very respectful of other Aboriginal spiritual practices. Casey has been working with Hull Services for the past sixteen years, as the Aboriginal Resource Coordinator. St. Mary’s University is honoured to have Casey as our indigenous elder.

In March 2008, Indigenous leaders and church officials embarked on a multi-city 'Remembering the Children' tour to promote activities of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. On January 21–22, 2008, the King's University College of Edmonton, Alberta, held an interdisciplinary studies conference on the subject of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee. On June 11 of the same year, Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized for the role of past governments in administration of the residential schools. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was officially established on June 2, 2008, and was completed in December 2015, creating the “Calls To Action”.

When Canada was created in 1867, the Churches were already operating a small number of boarding schools for the Aboriginal people of Ontario. In the coming years, Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries established missions and small boarding schools throughout the West. The relationship between the government and the Churches was institutionalized in 1883 when the federal government decided to establish three large residential schools in Western Canada. By the 1930s, there were over 70 federally funded, Church-run residential schools in operation in all parts of the country. By then, approximately one-third of school-aged Indigenous children were attending Residential Schools. Eventually more than 150,000 students would pass through the system. Over approximately 130 years, nearly 140 residential schools were part of the federally funded and administered system.

The partnership with the Churches remained in place until 1969 and, while most of the schools had closed by the 1980s, the last federally supported Residential Schools remained in operation until the mid-1990s. In the 1980s, various members of Canadian society began to undertake a reassessment of the Residential School experience. Starting in 1986, Canadian Churches began to issue apologies for attempting to impose European culture and values on Aboriginal peoples. Apologies specific to the Residential Schools were to follow in the 1990s, from the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the United Church of Canada, and two Mennonite Church Canada. In this panel presentation, Michael Lickers and Casey Eagle Speaker explore the impacts, lasting legacy and history of the Indian Residential Schools and the steps needed to move forward together towards genuine reconciliation.

### **New Testament and the World of Early Christianity**

#### **Michael Kok: Jesus’ Imperial Authority over the Sea**

A theoretical problem in some academic studies on the subject of Christology is their tendency to restrict the analysis to the Second Temple Jewish context and bracket off any influences from the wider Greco-Roman world, while simultaneously insisting that the earliest Christologies transcended all of the known

Jewish precedents about intermediary agents as well (cf. Smith 1990; Arnal 2005; Crossley 2008; Litwa 2014). Adela Collins (1994) adopts a better approach in contextualizing the nature miracles in the canonical Gospels in light of the Jewish and Greco-Roman background. Nevertheless, there remains a significant scholarly debate about whether there is an implicit “high Christology” in the Markan pericope where Jesus walks on the water (cf. Mark 6:45-52). Should this scene be interpreted as a divine theophany (e.g. Job 9:8; 38:16) or were there Jewish parallels about extraordinary humans performing miraculous feats over the natural elements (e.g. Exod 14:21–29; Josh 3:14-17; 2 Kings 2:8; Philo, *Moses* 1.55-58; *b. Baba Metzia* 59b)? Daniel Kirk and Stephen Young (2014) find a compromise between the two positions in that Psalm 89:25 (LXX Ps 88:26) extends Yahweh’s power to restrain the forces of chaos symbolized by the sea to the Davidic monarch. This paper will further compare Jesus’ royal authority over the chaotic waters to the pretensions of imperial rulers to exercise mastery over the sea (cf. Winn 2008; Cotter 2010; Kirk 2016; Kok 2016). This is one more example of how Mark re-applies imperial imagery to Jesus through the process of colonial mimicry (cf. Benny Liew 1999).

### **David Dalwood, The Semantics of Greek Nominal Hendiadys and Appositional Conjunction with Special Reference to the Rhetoric of Hebrews 2:2**

Through analyses of English discourse, linguists have identified non-Boolean uses of the conjunction *and*; in particular, cases of appositional conjunction, in which two noun phrases are coordinated to form a complex description of a single entity (e.g. Hoeksma 1988; Winter 2001; Coppock and Beaver 2015). Thus, whereas translations such as [Walked(bill,work)  $\wedge$  Wore(bill,coat)] for the statement *Bill walked to work and wore a coat*, which is true iff the conditions obtain wherein Bill both walked to work and wore a coat, suggest the potential utility of employing the Boolean conjunction for the English coordinate conjunction *and*, semanticists have recognized other uses of *and* that defy such logical descriptions. For instance, the aforementioned example may be contrasted with the alternative sentence *A great man and a good father have passed away*, in which, as Winter (2001) notes, the presence of the plural verb *have* eliminates the implicature that *great man* and *good father* share a relationship of co-reference. Cases such as the latter illustrate appositional or non-Boolean uses of the conjunction *and*, wherein “a conjoined noun phrase is interpreted as a complex description of a single individual and triggers singular rather than plural agreement on the verb when it is used as the subject” (Coppock and Beaver 2015:382). Such discussions have especial significance for treatments of nominal hendiadic constructions in texts of the New Testament, which have suffered from an insufficiently precise definition of the semantic value of *kai*. Drawing from the relevant linguistic and exegetical literature, this essay analyzes the clause *pasa parabasis kai parakoē elaben endikon misthapodosian* (“every transgression and disobedience receives a just recompense”) in Heb 2:2, arguing on the basis of the presence of the singular verb *elaben* therein that the compound subject *parabasis kai parakoē* represents a non-Boolean use of the element *kai*. Additional examples from elsewhere in the New Testament corpus are referenced to illustrate the grammatical relevance of the phenomenon of appositional conjunction when analyzing cases involving the failure of numerical concord within the Greek of the New Testament more broadly.

### **Matthew Moravec, Jesus and the Prophetic Word in Luke**

This paper will consider the distinctive ways in which Luke relates Jesus to the word of God in the third gospel. It will be shown that--in how Jesus receives the word of God, in how Jesus conveys the word of God, and in how Jesus is a source of the word of God--Luke portrays Jesus as the embodiment of the word of God. First, with respect to receiving the word of God, the infancy narratives’ parallel comparisons between Jesus and John will be examined. Whereas Luke notes that the word of God came to John, no similar statement is made in reference to Jesus; yet despite this absence, Jesus is said to teach the word of God in 5:1. The transposition of the second half of Deuteronomy 8:3 from the response to the tempter to 4:22 further demonstrates Luke's intention to present Jesus as a prophet who has received the word of God in a different way than OT prophets (and John): namely, by not having needed to receive it. Second,

the paper will then consider how Luke depicts Jesus as one who conveys the word of God, particularly through his usage of the term λόγος in contrast to the other synoptics. In 4:32, 8:11, and 8:21, Luke adds either λόγος αὐτοῦ (of Jesus) or λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ where parallels in Mark and Matthew use other phrasing. In so doing, Luke emphasizes the fact that although Jesus was not said to have received the word of God, he nonetheless is able to proclaim it. And third, the paper will conclude with an evaluation of the uniquely Lukan way in which Jesus is portrayed as a source of the word of God. In the infancy narratives, Luke sets a pattern of people speaking words of prophecy after either being filled with the Spirit or being given the word of God. However, in 21:15 Luke has Jesus himself promise to give his disciples a word of prophecy where the other synoptics explain it is the Spirit who will provide this word. This curious substitution (especially considering the attention Luke otherwise gives to the Spirit) establishes Jesus not only as a messenger of the prophetic word, but also as a source of it.

### **David King, A New Accounting of Wealth and Poverty in Luke**

Recent scholarly work on wealth and poverty in the Gospel of Luke, beginning with L. T. Johnson, has tended to focus on an inconsistency in Luke between passages that demand from the disciple total renunciation of possessions and passages that demand only almsgiving. This paper makes use of statistical analysis to challenge that framing of Luke's economic ethic and suggests that the real tension in Luke is between: 1) a radical economic ethic that proclaims good news for the poor and warns against wealth and 2) a voice which seems to embrace the business-as-usual of absentee landlords and economic accumulation. After cataloguing every reference in Luke to economic issues, the author classifies those references into several categories and four main themes: A) good news for the poor, B) warnings against wealth, C) accommodation to wealth, and D) words against the poor. Cross-referencing this with data on source and voice, the author is able to show that: 1) Luke does not present a major contradiction between renunciation and almsgiving, 2) Luke does present a radical message of good news for the poor and warnings against wealth, and 3) the main challenges to that radical message come from Q material and parables, particularly the Parable of the Pounds. This new wide-angle analysis of Luke suggests a new direction for further study of economic themes in the third gospel.

### **Tyler Vandergaag: Selling Possessions at Pentecost: A Unique Event (Acts 2:45)**

In Acts 2:45, the early Christians are described as “selling their possessions and goods (τὰ κτήματα καὶ τὰς ὑπάρξεις ἐπίπρασκον).” This is sometimes viewed as the Christian way to handle material possessions. Others consider this to be an idealistic redaction on the part of the author meant to amplify the fellowship of these first Christians. Contrary to these views, I will argue that these possessions and goods are best understood as the offerings that faithful Jews had initially planned to present before Yahweh at the Feast of Weeks (i.e. Pentecost). However, as they make their way to the temple, many of them are converted to the Way and, subsequently, come to believe that Yahweh no longer requires their offerings. As a result, they sell their offerings and share the proceeds with other converts to the Way who are in need. Understood in this way, Acts 2:45 was neither meant to idealize the fellowship of the early church nor meant to be replicated by the church of all times and places. Rather, the selling of these possessions and goods is a unique event that occurs as the result of many faithful Jews converting to the Way at the time of a festival to Yahweh.

### **Beyond Texts: Examining Contexts**

This panel of three papers will examine non-textual evidence and/or employ alternative methods for discussing aspects of early Christianity. We are all very aware of the overwhelming tendency within the study of Christianity to focus on texts; whether these texts are the canon, patristic writings or sometimes the apocrypha writings. These papers will examine buildings, art and music for the insights these may provide.

### Anne Moore, **Glimpses of the Women at the Empty Tomb**

The women at the empty tomb (Mark 16:1-8; Matt. 18:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18) are ambiguous and/or superfluous characters within the context of the resurrection narratives of Jesus. In the original ending of Mark, the women flee and it is reported that they share their experience with no one. In Matthew, the women inform the disciples; however, there is no indication of the success of their message and their narrative is augmented with additional resurrection appearances before the disciples. The women seem superfluous. In Luke, the women are not believed; therefore the added resurrection appearances are necessary to ensure the continuation of the gospel proclamation. The synoptic presentations of the women at the empty tomb suppress their role; a pattern that is reflective in the Gospel of John as Peter's and the beloved disciple's journey to the Empty Tomb and the subsequent post-resurrection appearances overwhelm Mary Magdalene's experience in the garden. Although Mary Magdalene does gain some early status; she does so within the context of the Nag Hammadi material.

However, the material evidence from the third to the seventh centuries suggests that the women at the empty tomb were significant within various Christian communities. There are ivory carvings, mosaics, frescoes, and pilgrimage tokens depicting the women at the empty tomb. This presentation will examine this material evidence and present some preliminary findings in terms of the reception and significance of the narratives about the women at the empty tomb.

### Sharon Mogen, **Women and Music-Making in Christian Late Antiquity**

This paper will verify women's involvement in music-making during Christian late antiquity in the Latin West. The term 'music-making' shall refer to a medley of performance arts—singing, musical instrumentation, dance, and sensory drama—as components of funerary or ritual lament. While there is ample evidence (iconographic and textual) for funerary lament led by women in other ancient Mediterranean societies (Egyptian, Jewish, Greek, Roman), the same is not true for Christianity. Only a small sample of texts prove female music-making did occur at private Christian celebrations for the dead. These letters and sermons, written by bishops, and records from Church councils and synods from the fourth through ninth centuries include complaints (rhetorical condemnation) and regulations pertaining to Christian funerals; the laity, argued the bishops, were engaged in 'pagan' practices and women were performing 'unseemly' ritual lament. Notably, the complaints and legislation seem to have had little effect. The same restrictions appear repeatedly from Spain to Gaul to North Africa. The textual evidence deserves a closer look. It was the product of its context—the prevailing social, political, and religious circumstances in the western empire at the time. One must ask: What was the situation 'on the ground' making the bishops respond as they did to funerary lament and women's music-making? Several issues were in play.

First, late antiquity was a time of active public/private debate. The new public institution, the Church, presented a challenge to the private religiosity of families (*sacra privata*). At issue was the role that private Christian devotion—including women's music-making in funerary lament—would play in a collective Church identity.

Second, until the fourth and fifth centuries Church authorities were more concerned with the salvation of the living than with Christian burial and commemoration of the dead. Consequently, the bishops mandated nothing in the way of a Christian ceremony to replace traditional Roman funerals but instead left the care of the dead out of their control and in the hands of the family. There is virtually no evidence of a formal liturgy for a Christian funeral until the eighth and ninth centuries. Therefore, it may be assumed that Christian families continued to follow local Roman customs including women's ritual lament.

Third, the behavior of women in public was of concern. Throughout antiquity women singers and musicians had a very bad reputation. Female performers at banquets were courtesans (prostitutes) meaning that association with musical instruments and/or singing implied a woman's lack of virtue—she was considered vulgar and profane.

Finally, along with economic and social changes in late antiquity came a massive transformation in Roman family ideology; Christians were obliged to look to the public Church to meet their social and religious needs. The episcopate assumed control of the martyr cult and cult of relics from private families and developed its own rituals/liturgies and spaces for those liturgies. Consequently, private domestic practices were assimilated and, in the case of lament, replaced by the decorous singing of psalms at funerals— this time, led by male clergy.

Rebecca Christian: **Placing Early Christians: An Examination of Baptism at Dura Europos through the Use of Place Studies**

The House Church at Dura Europos has been investigated largely through approaches in art history and architecture. Within the art history interpretations, the excavated wall frescos found in the house church's baptistery have attracted analysis over and above the church building itself. Though the uncovered wall frescos warranted such examination, the house's role in creating Christian ritual and identity has not been fully explored. In focusing specifically on the frescos, the totality of the Christian ritual experience has been overlooked. In addition, scholarship conducted within art history has largely overlooked the role of the body in ritual performance, and the transformative effect of initiation rituals in terms of identity formation. Scholarship on the architecture of the building, on the other hand, does provide some consideration to the role of the place in terms of ritual and identity and how the specificity of place contributes to a particular 'Durene' Christian identity. Both streams of scholarship suffer from a lack of interdisciplinary methodology. However, the architectural approaches do not consider the affective nature of the ritual in terms of identity construction. I propose to conduct a more holistic examination of the Durene house church. My approach differs from most previous scholarship on the house as it will be interdisciplinary. This project, employing the lens of Ritual Studies, Affect Theory, Cognitive Science, and Place studies will reveal the connections between materiality (building and art), ritual, and identity. I aim to examine how the particular experience of place during the baptism ritual affected the participant's acquisition of certain identifiable values. Specifically, I shall examine the Durene baptistery and house church as a specific place that conditions early Christian ritual, and, in doing so, influences the developmental trajectory of the Durene Christian community. I will address this place as an initiation site, and argue that it serves a crucial role in demarcating key boundaries between the Roman, Judaic, and Christian communities. The ritual baptism at this particular site not only commemorated the initiation of early Christians; the site itself was integral in creating and entrenching identifiable features of early Christian identity.

Robert Cousland: **The Miseducation of Jesus in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas**

The theme of education in the *Paidika*, the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, is one of the most prominent in the work. Jesus is described as going to study with teachers no less than three times, and at the end of the work he parades his profound knowledge of the Scriptures before the elders and teachers of the law in the Temple. In contrast to Luke 2:41-51, he is actually described as *teaching* them. Taken together, all these references to pedagogy create the impression that education is something well worth gaining, and this is, indeed, the view upheld by the majority of the *Paidika's* commentators.

I wish to argue for the opposite point of view. When the individual teaching narratives are considered in detail, it emerges that Jesus does not really learn anything from his instruction--he already knows everything that the teachers attempt to impart to him. In fact, his first two teachers can be regarded as ignorant failures; it is only his third teacher that models the appropriate demeanour towards Jesus--he sits and listens and praises Jesus' sublime understanding. As for the teachers of the law and the elders in the Temple, the narrative demonstrates that despite their application to the study of the Law, they still haven't grasped the essentials. Jesus has to teach them. True divine knowledge only comes by revelation. The overall impression that emerges from the work is that it is intended to appeal to the anti-intellectual strands of the "Great Church" that Origen so vividly describes: The Christians' "injunctions are like this.

'Let no one educated, no one wise, no one sensible draw near. For these abilities are thought by us to be evils'" (Origen, *Cels.* 3.44 Chadwick).

#### Stanley Helton, **Paul's Priestly Self-Identification in Romans 15:14–16**

Scholars frequently comment about how unusual Paul's priestly self-description is in Rom 15:16. Yet when viewed rhetorically in the context of Romans, Paul's metaphors prove to be a powerful means of persuading his varied readers/hearers to join him in similar priestly work. This paper, framed within rhetorical models for reading New Testament letters, argues that Paul is intentionally choosing *priestly* language, instead of *apostolic* language, to create *ethos* with his readers. Paul's ultimate goal is to solicit priestly partners in *his* sacred ministry to Spain, and maybe, even priestly offerings for his current project, the collection for the poor in Jerusalem.

#### Giosue Ghisalberti, **Early Christianity and the 2<sup>nd</sup> century Epicurean Inscription of Diogenes of Oenoanda**

With few exceptions, Epicurean philosophy and the New Testament have remained largely isolated from each other. One important study has examined the connection between Paul's psychagogy and the Epicurean teacher Philodemus of Gadara. There has also been some work (essays) on the part of both classicists knowledgeable about the Epicurean tradition and New Testament scholars. However, there has been virtually no detailed research on the 2<sup>nd</sup> century Lycian Diogenes of Oenoanda and his knowledge of early Christianity. Before examining the thematic concepts (on "strangers" in the context of Roman citizenship, war and military service, and rhetoric), I will present two preliminary arguments – one geographic, one historical, the latter so as to offer two counter-arguments to Epicurean scholars. Clay believes that "we do not know exactly when Christianity reached Oenoanda, but its way was well prepared by Diogenes." Paul's no less than three missionary journeys in the area (setting the first in the late 40's) makes Clay's dating wrong – almost by a century. Gordon speculates that "the spread of Christianity distressed Diogenes," a comment in no way demonstrable in the inscription. On the contrary, the record is unequivocal. The geographical proximity of Oenoanda to well-known Christian centers assured their mutual knowledge if not direct connection. Paul and Timothy established many churches in the area – we know of at least three: in Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis (Col. 4:13), not to mention the church in nearby Ephesus – that would have been known by the non-Christian population, both for its teaching and community.

The Epicurean inscription has been dated around the time of the reign of the emperor Hadrian, 117-138. The dates of his reign are significant insofar as they coincide with the Bar Kokhba revolt of 132-135. As a consequence of the war, there was a sizeable population of refugees who would have migrated to Hellenistic cities with well-known Jewish populations. If Jewish refugees did arrive in the Lycian city of Oenoanda, several themes of the Epicurean inscription are noteworthy. Three in particular stand out: there are several notable references to "strangers" who have recently arrived in the region. Although not necessarily refugees, they are certainly what the local population would have called "foreigners." As a defense of welcoming these visitors, Diogenes presents an idea of universality instead of the supposed cosmopolitanism inherent in being a Roman citizen, an opposition to military service and war as inimical to Epicurean *autarkeia*, and a rejection of the use and abuse of rhetoric as then socially practiced. Both Epicureans and Christians, considered by some to be related due to their independence from, for example, the cultic ritual of sacrifice, each reconceived the meaning of being a citizen while fully accepting the "stranger," rejected the Roman military culture of violence and occupation, and provided a critique of the then-prevalent rhetoric most used in political assemblies and in courts of law.

#### Glen Fairen, **Sethianism: Gnosticism's Last Gasp**

One of the most surprising things in Christian Origins scholarship is the resilience of Gnosticism. Even though the so-called Gnostics did not exist outside of the imagination of the heresiologists, and the category has been repeatedly shown to carry little utility for explaining any group or groups in antiquity, there nonetheless seems to be a continued scholarly need for something like Gnosticism, particularly



when dealing with convoluted relationships between Christianity and Judaism. Indeed, considering the acceptance of the “Ways that Never Parted” model, there seems to be a need to find a place for those Christians that are not easily reconfigured to being pro-Jewish or Judeo-centric (such as *Matthew* or Paul have been), and contain overly Hellenized (i.e. “anti-Jewish”) speculation. While this used to be the function of Gnosticism, there still exists a category that, intentionally or not, appears less about describing ancient practice and more about (re)quarantining texts as the “Gnostic Other.” This classification is Sethian, Sethianism, or Sethian Gnosticism.

Although initially conceived as a typological shorthand to describe a cluster of elements found among a variety of Nag Hammadi texts, Sethianism has unfortunately taken on a life of its own. While lip-service to its typological function is still paid, most scholars have nonetheless given a historical footprint to these Sethian groups, postulating a range of proposed origins, doctrines and detailed schismatic histories of how they must have deviated from various other Jewish or Christian groups. In other words it seems that Sethianism has replaced the rhetorical space that Gnosticism used to occupy: the deviant “other” that, lamprey-like, tried (and failed) to take over and/or left its host Judaism or Christianity.

The problem, however, is that despite the best creative efforts of scholars, there is a) no historical evidence for these schismatic Sethians who must have separated from mainstream Christianity or Judaism and b) the variety of proposed elements that makes something Sethian can easily be found within a variety of non-Sethian Christian and Jewish groups. Indeed it appears that despite Sethianism being conceived as an outsiders that tried to move into the Judeo-Christian street, it appears that they are really just a variety of embarrassing cousins that have always been part of the Jewish and Christian families of the Greco-Roman neighborhood.

The question that this paper proposes to examine is, not what makes something Sethian or not, but why scholars insisted on creating and subsequently maintaining this category, granting Sethianism historical presence, when the evidence for such groups is non-existent. What conceptual work is done by scholars who utilize this category? And is Sethianism more about describing movements in antiquity, or about buttressing modern constructions of what must have been the beliefs of ancient Christians and Jews?

## **Religion and Society**

### **Social Integration of Bhutanese Refugees in Small Cities: The Case of Lethbridge, Alberta**

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Bhutanese refugees have recently been resettled in Canada after decades of displacement and years of living in refugee camps administered by the United Nations. About a thousand Bhutanese refugees are now living in Lethbridge, a small city of about 100,000 population; in fact, Lethbridge hosts the largest number of Bhutanese in the country since 2014. Small cities like Lethbridge face a number of social and infrastructural challenges to accommodate and respond to the needs of the growing number of refugees from around the world wanting to call it their home. In this paper, I explore how Bhutanese refugees, mainly Hindus, have found ways to integrate in certain social niches in the predominantly Christian community, the factors for resilience amidst subtle forces of racism and discrimination, their modes of civic engagement and collaboration, and intergenerational challenges in living in liberal democratic states where individual rights are secured. Further, I examine the different agencies, both private and public, that provide services and support to promote the welfare of refugees and their successful integration. Data for this paper is based on ethnographic research as a resident of Lethbridge with critical familiarity with immigrant-serving organizations, participant observation as a former committee member of the city government’s program to eliminate racism and discrimination, and key interviews from leaders of the Bhutanese community in Lethbridge.

## **“(Str)angered with/in my own land: An Abyssal Understanding of Selves with/in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside”**

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This paper will explore the feasibility of a self in a context of continual displacement, specifically the internally displaced persons in a Canadian cosmopolitan context. The paper will springboard from the An Yountae’s recent work in the perspectives in continental philosophy series, *The Decolonial Abyss: Mysticism and Cosmopolitics from the Ruins*. Gleaning insights from Yountae’s exploration of the abyss (neither presence nor absence, neither being nor nothing) and his exploration of the creolized self, I will transpose his work into the urban context of Vancouver wherein there is an im/possibility of stability with/in constant dis/placement which undermines and conceptions of the self built on resolve or stable experiences of the world.

I will approach the topic spatially through the neighbourhood that is Vancouver’s downtown eastside and then temporally (historically) through those same places. As a method I will move theo-poetically as the means to speak in between discourses, places, and times.

By prioritizing a physical space the paper will collide refugees and refuges in their (dis)placed communities. The collisions will continue through an interaction with the overlapping histories of displacement that have occurred in the same location, from a Coast Salish settlement, to an ecosystem, Asian Town, Jap Town during WWII, and Hogans Alley (Vancouver’s black community). Concluding with a more focused exploration of selves within the current squeeze of the “24 block” to the “8 block” due to gentrification.

## **A Three-Phase Approach to Religion and Science: A Rational Interpretation of the Teachings of Jesus**

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The on-going debate between atheistic scientists and the followers of organized religions may suggest that science and religion are mutually exclusive or even antagonistic to each other but, as described in the proposed paper, they share a common thread and follow a similar three-phase approach consisting of reinforcement learning, exploration, and discovery of the true nature of reality. The main difference between them is that religion explores the nature of subjective reality whereas science explores the nature of physical reality. The mystery surrounding religions is caused by the fact that, being subjective, religious revelations are personal and remain unknown to others who have not realized them. In stark contrast, scientific discoveries have become common knowledge through independent validation and dissemination. A brief description of the applications of the three-phase approach in science and religion is given below.

In the first phase, students are taught symbols, axioms, definitions, rules, and precepts through reinforcement and memorization. They are necessary for exploring the nature of reality.

The second phase is devoted to the exploration of the known. The role of the teacher is to guide the student in exploration by applying the principles learned in the first phase.

In science, experiments are conducted in laboratories under prescribed control conditions to reinforce theoretical concepts. Discoveries occur in the third phase when the researcher attempts to extend the boundaries of scientific knowledge by subjecting it to adversarial inputs that are either logically generated or are already present as inconsistencies between the presumed model and meticulously observed data. Intuitive resolution of the problem results in a new paradigm.

In religion, the explorer applies the prescribed precepts (e.g., the Ten Commandments) learned in the first phase to look within and study the interactions of the body, mind, and emotions in response to self-

generated or external inputs. Patanjali's Yoga Sutras (aphorisms) provide a unique platform to conduct this exploration. It begins with asanas (popularly known as yoga) that focuses on the body. It is followed by breathing practices to learn the body-emotion connection. The next two steps involve introspection as the mind responds to internal and external inputs. The penultimate step is dhyana (meditation or Zen) in a state of let-go. At the end of the second phase, practitioners may experience a relatively calm mind but could face an impasse or an abyss without a logical path to samadhi (nirvana, dynamic balance, or liberation).

The Buddha and Jesus bridged this gap with ingenious teachings to be practiced in the third phase. The Buddha devised a relatively gradual but safe approach to eliminate ignorance, end suffering, and realize nirvana. In stark contrast, Jesus introduced a revolutionary approach with a steep adversarial learning curve. It is the swiftest but also the riskiest path to liberation. The paper describes how diligent practice of their teachings would reveal the Truth that liberates.

### **Christian-Muslim Relations in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Ghana and Nigeria**

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Christianity and Islam have often served the purpose of ensuring the moral integrity of some societies and enhancing peaceful co-existence around the world. However, in some parts of the world, they have been strong catalysts for wars and conflicts. Throughout the time of their encounter, members of both religious faiths have had a double-edged relationship—one marked by tolerance and peace, and the other marked by intolerance and conflict. However, the later has been more profound these days than ever. Conflict between Christians and Muslims has been escalating in numerous countries around the world. These conflicts are not only based on their competing truth claims but also, influenced by institutional structures and bigotries deeply entrenched in such countries.

In Africa, Christian-Muslim relations have ranged from tolerance to deadly clashes. These two extreme scenarios can be found in two countries in West Africa – Ghana and Nigeria. This is despite the fact that the two countries seem to share so many things in common, ranging from common ancestral ties to common culture. In Ghana, Christians and Muslims have coexisted peacefully since the introduction of both religions in the 15th century, reflected in a relationship that is characterized by mutual respect and tolerance. Nigeria, on the other hand, is greatly divided along religious fault lines. With virtually an evenly divided Christian and Muslim population, Nigeria has been more prone to sectarian and inter-faith violence than Ghana, which has a slightly higher population of Christians than Muslims.

Therefore, the overarching aim of this research is to better understand Christian-Muslim relations in Ghana and Nigeria and why there is peaceful coexistence in one setting and conflict in another.

This research project builds heavily on the work of Dr. Abdie Kazemipur. In his recent books, *The Muslim Question in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014), he has argued that the key to the peaceful coexistence of Muslims and others is for the groups involved to feel that they are able to experience positive social, economic, and institutional integration, which includes positive media portrayals. Hence, this work examines how Christians and Muslims in both countries fare in these four domains and how their experiences affect their relations. A Pew 2009 data on Christians and Muslims relations in sub-Saharan Africa and 16 in-depth interviews I conducted in Ghana are used as the primary data for this study.

As a case example, this research may suggest important implications for policy making in both countries, and, potentially, for relations between Christians and Muslims in many other parts of the world.

### **All in the Family?: Hindutva, ISI, and the Alt-Right**

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It has become clear in recent years that a global surge in populisms has been on the rise, and that these target and denigrate a perceived out-group as a means, in part, to solidify the in-group's identity and to immunize it from the perceived dangers of social change, however named. When these populisms intermarry with religious commitments, themselves constructed with purpose, the mix can be lethal. Because such forms of populisms are evident in globally diverse contexts of human living, comparison is appropriate, and comparison reveals both similarities and important differences among the examples. First, this paper compares three examples and gleans from them a set of shared factors which, taken together, suggest family resemblances, while noting important differences and distinctiveness. Hindutva political and religious ideas in India will be compared with the rise of Daesh in Iraq and Syria and with the rise of a recently labeled 'Alt-Right' among some white Christian nationalists in Europe and North America. Those family resemblances entail specific and frequently suspect views of history, multiculturalism, religious identity, sex and gender, and education. Second, the paper applies to each example the duplex theory of hate as articulated by Robert Sternberg (past-president of the APA), as a means to argue from a social-psychological perspective for analogous relationships across the examples. One finding gained on the basis of this analysis pertains to the ubiquitous though culturally specific presence of Islamophobia, as some form of Islam and Muslims becomes subject to a universal negative stereotype in all three selected examples. Third and finally, a theological agenda for religious identity will be proposed in order to address, therapeutically, the family resemblances.

**'We're Here to Improve Their Sense of Responsibility' – Faith-Based Activism and Global Capitalism**  
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The rise of neoliberal agenda since the 1980s has been met not only by resistance in the form of anti-globalization activism and but also by other countervailing pressures that emphasize the externalities of market forces and their preeminent actor, the corporation. Religious leaders increasingly speak warnings; the now "retired" Pope Benedict XVI, in the 2009 encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* ("Charity in Truth"), says that businesses in a world of globalization have a greater responsibility than ever to ensure their activities take into consideration their impact on people and the environment. These sentiments are reflected in the rise of "corporate social responsibility" (CSR), the idea that businesses have obligations to society involving consideration of factors beyond profit maximization and strict adherence to legal regulations. These extra-legal responsibilities include the promotion of sustainable growth, the protection of human rights and long-term social and environmental well-being, all of which run counter to the neoliberal emphasis on individual self-interest and the virtues of market-led governance. CSR is not a new idea (antecedents can be found in previous centuries, such as the anti-slavery movement) but its modern manifestation (especially in Western developed countries but also increasingly elsewhere) resembles a vast transnational 'social movement' that some argue is reconstituting business-society relations on a global scale. Some call CSR "one of the more striking developments of the past several decades in the global political economy" and others argue there is a high degree of "institutionalization of CSR" taking place within and amongst firms that will have long-lasting effects on the international community. The emergence of a global social movement dedicated to increasing corporate responsibility has coincided with the rise of neoliberal globalization as the dominant economic (and social) motif of our era. What role did religion have in the rise of modern CSR? And what is relationship between the practice of faith and the operation of business in a globalizing world with complex supply chains and a high degree of political and social interdependence? In this chapter, I will argue two main points. First, it is clear that faith-based activism has had an important influence on the development of corporate social responsibility, including via the evolving practice of socially responsible investment. The rise of modern shareholder activism by religiously-inspired people and religious organizations has helped condition and re-shape corporate power associated with neoliberal globalization. Second, while it is true that some religiously-based activism (for example, within the American conservative evangelical community) seeks to promote neoliberal globalization, many individuals and associations inspired by religious conviction are in fact seeking to reform and transform capitalism so that the worst elements of neoliberal globalization can be softened, if not eliminated.

## **Religion and Society: LGBTQIAA Experience and Religious Impacts**

### **Religion and Sexual Orientation in Canada: National Attitudes Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow**

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As Canada celebrates its 150th birthday in 2017, there is considerable interest in looking back at where life in the country has come from, as well as looking forward to where life appears to be going. One of area of interest is sexual orientation. It's clear that negative views of homosexuality and same sex relationships were highly pervasive in the past, particularly among people who were part of the country's prominent religious groups. Today, such attitudes are widely viewed as inappropriate in a Canada that takes considerable pride in being a highly pluralistic society. In this research note, views of homosexuality over the past 50 years – the 1970s through today – are examined through an analysis of national survey data, with special attention given to the role that religion has played and continues to play in influencing views of sexual orientation. The note concludes with some reflections on religion's future role, particularly in light of the accelerated numbers of people arriving from other countries as devout Christians and Muslims.

### **Gender Identity and Common Ground for Evangelical Communities**

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Evangelical communities are being confronted with the advent of sexualities and genders that do not fit into their understanding of God's created order, and their understanding of scripture as inspired and inerrant. Gender issues are mediated through a theological hermeneutic that holds particular ideas about God, God's creation as gendered male and female, and God's intention for the two sexes to be one in marriage.

Members of these communities who identify as outside of these gender and sexuality norms are stumbling blocks to traditional understandings of God's created order. This means that although they stand in front of their fellow believers and hold an identity that is other than the perceived default (cis gendered), their fellow believers deny this identity in favor of holding to what they consider traditional biblical understandings. As a consequence, trans and gender queer individuals bear the brunt of this tension in their lived realities.

How should one negotiate the relationship between the way the Bible demonstrates God's hand in creation along with these emerging understandings of sexuality and gender? Are these really as mutually exclusive as this theology holds? Is this the hill that evangelicals should die on, in effort to preserve their identity?

I argue that using the methods of Biblical interpretation that are common to evangelical communities, there is a way of holding the Bible as inerrant and inspired while recognizing complexity and particularity with regard to gender identity and sexualities. Using the ethnographic work of Dawn Moon as a starting place—recognizing that an individual's understanding of scripture is always already mediated through their experiences—I call into question modes of theology that hold inflexibly to a gender-binary as the only "good" way God created human beings. I propose that through the entry-point of philological textual interpretation, which has been popular in evangelical churches with the separation and explanation of differences in the Greek terms for love, and the names of God in the Hebrew Bible, combined with adaptation of parabolic teaching to situations of today, common ground and empathy can be fostered amongst evangelical congregations and universities with regard to particularities in gender identity and sexuality.

## **Joint Session with Theology and Philosophy of Religion and Religion and Society**

## **Eucharistic Solidarity in Response to Refugee Crises: A Narrative Reading of Table Fellowship in Luke's Gospel**

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Christians engage with the New Testament text to discern formative pathways of action and behavior. This paper explores the importance of table fellowship as a proto-Christian ethical practice in Luke's gospel narrative. In Luke's Gospel, table fellowship and meal rituals function as recurring narrative events in which both the relational ethics and the eschatological dimension of Jesus's teaching are often presented in parallel. Accordingly, a narrative reading of Luke illuminates ways in which the gospel narrative heralds the practice of solidarity with the displaced and marginalized through the recurring theme of table fellowship. Of particular importance to this discussion, then, will be an investigation of how eschatology informs an understanding of Christian ethics and sacramental expression as founded and facilitated in dispositions of charitable love and solidarity with displaced peoples.

A narrative reading of Luke's Gospel also allows us to account for the eschatological connotations of Eucharist, as a ritual institution of table fellowship, while duly attending to the notion that future consummation is inseparable from present obligation. Consequently, in this case a narrative reading is also a testifying reading in that it reveals how the recurring theme of table fellowship might notify and enable ethical prerogatives in their sacramental and ecclesial expression in the twenty-first century. Appreciating the way in which Luke allows the eschatological teachings of Jesus to both enhance and undergird his stories surrounding meal gatherings works to reveal how, for the earliest Christians at least, ritualized meal gatherings are inescapably focused on God's response to acute human need.

Extending the ramifications of this narrative analysis into the context of present refugee crises reveals entry points for ethical action in response to the eschatological teachings of Jesus Christ. In situations, such as the present Syrian refugee crisis, where human need is so palpably evident, the response of professing Christians is necessarily one of welcome, provision, and solidarity in suffering. Yet, and perhaps even more importantly, a Christian ethic of solidarity is founded and embodied in Eucharistic practices and Eucharistic commitments. Beyond perceptions of the Lord's Supper as instantiations of remembrance or community formation, appreciating table fellowship in its ethical and eschatological contexts discloses a summons to ecclesial embodiment of God's commitment to rescue and restore the displaced and the marginalized. The Lord's Supper, table fellowship, and the eschatological banquet are situated in Luke's story not to reinforce our ritual practices, but to actively transform our ethical praxis.

## **"The Tears that a Civil Servant Cannot See" - Emmanuel Levinas and the Conditions of Peace in the time of the Refugee**

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The plight of the refugee has become increasingly urgent. The sad reality is that international news feeds over the past several years have been too full of stories that describe the forced displacement of people caused by organized violence. While such awareness is an important first step, it is vital to ask 'what would a moral response to the refugee entail today?' In this paper I draw upon the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas to critically address this question through a consideration of his views on the conditions of peace. The phrase "the tears that a civil servant cannot see" comes from Levinas himself, and was meant to highlight the ways that politics can be blind without the recognition of an interpersonal ethics of self and other. More specifically, I want to show how a Levinasian peace links these two essential social realities. First there is his description and analysis of ethical responsibility. For Levinas this involves a transcendent moment of encounter with the face of the other person in their vulnerability, a moment which has profound implications for our ethical lives since it calls the freedom of the self into question. Next there is his political commitment to justice in the form of the establishment and support of legal and institutional arrangements that make the cooperative life of the state possible. This understanding of peace as the bringing together of the ethical and the political in Levinas, which involves recognizing how they interpenetrate as well as diverge, opens a space to consider how peace might still be possible in

locales where the displacement of people has been most pronounced. While Levinas recognized the criticism that his philosophy overall was too far removed from the everyday reality of people, he accepted this utopian quality, especially in terms of the infinite extent of the responsibility that the self has for the other. He never wavered in his insistence that his philosophy could still inform both our day to day actions and longer term commitments. Current third wave scholarship on Levinas (the first two waves involved explaining Levinas's philosophy and then showing how it impacts our understanding of language in general) has embraced this assumption and strives to develop Levinas's thinking by examining social and political topics from this utopian or 'out of place' perspective. I hope this paper stakes out a compelling position that invites a dialogue into the ways that a Levinasian peace, informed by a transcendent ethics and a politics of justice, can help us think about a moral response to the refugee today.

### **Early Christianity and the 2nd century Epicurean Inscription of Diogenes of Oenoanda**

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Despite the pioneering work by Norman DeWitt on the relationship between Epicurus' Hellenistic philosophy and Paul's letters, as well the considerable contribution by Abraham Malherbe on Greek thought and the New Testament, scholarship has for the most part neglected to further consider the extent of the dialogue that began with Paul in Athens with the Epicureans (Acts 17:18-33). With few exceptions, Epicurean philosophy and the New Testament have remained largely isolated from each other. One important study has examined the connection between Paul's psychagogy and the Epicurean teacher Philodemus of Gadara. There has also been some work (essays) on the part of both classicists knowledgeable about the Epicurean tradition and New Testament scholars. However, there has been virtually no detailed research on the 2nd century Lycian Diogenes of Oenoanda and his knowledge of early Christianity. Before examining the thematic concepts (on "strangers" in the context of Roman citizenship, war and military service, and rhetoric), I will present two preliminary arguments – one geographic, one historical, the latter so as to offer two counter-arguments to Epicurean scholars. Clay believes that "we do not know exactly when Christianity reached Oenoanda, but its way was well prepared by Diogenes." Paul's no less than three missionary journeys in the area (setting the first in the late 40's) makes Clay's dating wrong – almost by a century. Gordon speculates that "the spread of Christianity distressed Diogenes." – a comment in no way demonstrable in the inscription. On the contrary, the record is unequivocal. The geographical proximity of Oenoanda to well-known Christian centers assured their mutual knowledge if not direct connection. Paul and Timothy established many churches in the area – we know of at least three: in Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis (Col. 4:13), not to mention the church in nearby Ephesus – that would have been known by the non-Christian population, both for its teaching and community. If we then add more churches to the north, in Pontus and Bythia, as attested by Pliny in a letter to the emperor Trajan, by the beginning of the second century churches are numerous and widespread. This then serves the background for the consideration of the Epicurean inscription by Diogenes and its relationship to ideas prevalent in early Christianity.

The Epicurean inscription has been dated around the time of the reign of the emperor Hadrian, 117-138. The dates of his reign are significant insofar as they coincide with the Bar Kokhba revolt of 132-135. As a consequence of the war – first, its beginning and, second, its end – there was a sizeable population of refugees who, in attempting to find safety and a new life, would have migrated to Hellenistic cities with well-known Jewish populations. If such is the case, and if Jewish refugees did arrive in the Lycian city of Oenoanda, several themes of the Epicurean inscription are noteworthy. Three in particular stand out: there are several notable references to "strangers" who have recently arrived in the region. Although not necessarily refugees, they are certainly what the local population would have called "foreigners." As a defense of welcoming these visitors, Diogenes presents an idea of universality instead of the supposed cosmopolitanism inherent in being a Roman citizen, an opposition to military service and war as inimical to Epicurean autarkeia, and a rejection of the use and abuse of rhetoric as practiced in political assemblies and in courts of law. Both Epicureans and Christians, considered by some to be related due to their independence from, for example, the cultic ritual of sacrifice, each reconceived the meaning of being a citizen while fully accepting the "stranger," rejected the Roman military culture of violence and

occupation, and provided a critique of the then-prevalent rhetoric most used in political assemblies and in courts of law.

### **Sweeping the Strangers and Outsiders in Your City: Luke's Rich Man, Lazarus, Boundaries, and Houseless Humans in Portland.**

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While Luke's story of the Rich Man and Lazarus was an attempt to teach a well to do audience to show compassion for the poor, it also became a story concerning boundaries. The Rich Man would not cross boundaries to help Lazarus, therefore Lazarus could not cross a divide to help his suffering tenant. Since ancient communities dwelt with the poor rather than confining them to sections of the city, the boundaries were more than geographical.

While historically US urban communities separated the upper class from the poor through housing projects or gated communities, society is changing as houseless individuals live in every major section of the city. Due to the rising populations of the houseless, poverty becomes present in every neighborhood as more and more individuals sleep on the streets and tents continue to increase as forced exilic communities within the city. However non-geographical "boundaries" hinder our work in Portland with houseless individuals as we attempt to integrate men, women, and children into the fabric of our society. As we have begun to partner with coalitions to develop camps, tiny homes, and provide services for those on the streets it has become evident that helping these individuals requires the support and acceptance of community members, who continue to separate themselves from "those poor people." The use of "Police Sweeps" in Portland, to dislocate our Lazarean community has begun to create sympathy for these humans, a needed ethic among our community.

Resistance from neighborhoods, law enforcement, service providers, and business owners has not only become a challenge but a barrier to "welcoming the stranger among us." Those who are "social refugees" not only struggle to find support from the community, but faith communities as well. Welcoming or accepting these individuals, families, and communities requires crossing boundaries of fear, judgment, and trust as our coalitions partner with others to create a "home" where peace, safety, and justice exist for social exiles needing support and love. In this paper I intend to discuss methods we are using to develop relationships and help our community "cross" these emotional/spiritual boundaries to create Luke's empire of justice, peace, mercy, and shalom.

### **Religion and Society: Social Engagement: Religion in Context**

#### **Engaging the Reality of Evil: Bonhoeffer's Resistance and Lessons for Today – From Generalities to Specifics via the Witness of Pastoral Ministry, Practical Theology, and Prophetic Faith**

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Evil can defy definition if viewed as an absolute. Viewed as a relative term H. R. Niebuhr's depiction of evil is deemed more helpful: i.e. when a being starves, thwarts and/or reduces another being in its activities (see Radical Monotheism and Western Culture, Appendix A).

The approach of biography-as-theology, as an aspect of practical theology and ministry, is further helpful. There are those who study evil (e.g. Robert Jay Lifton, Erich Fromm, Paul Tillich) and those who live in and come to resist it. Bonhoeffer exemplifies both, serving best as a living witness to what it takes to come resist evil – from first a mode of non-resistance or pacifism and then reluctantly but with a sense of forgiveness, to the point of actively resisting evil unto a plot to kill Hitler in the middle of WW II. His haunting question of "are we still of service?" -- written as a 1943 Xmas letter ("After Ten Years") to friends and co-conspirators -- illustrates such an agonizing move. As a confession of deeply felt failure but a profession nonetheless of what shared courage means, it is instructive. Also instructive is what shaped Bonhoeffer's radicalization as a theologian of resistance, judged by many as martyrdom.



“Are we of any use” comes to the third and major portion of the paper: To use as a case in point an approach of a conscientiously troubled young man to his church for support to name, unmask, and engage the nature of evil as he has come to feel and think of it in current times. As of this proposal the author has helped Michael take his cry to an independent network called “A Community Aware” (ACA). Less dependent on church business-as-usual and its oft, muting claims on the ministers, ACA is engaging the theme of evil by way of a forum, a spin-off of a study group, and any wider possibilities to assist with the (Walter Wink-related) naming, unmasking, and engaging tasks. It will use a recent bio-documentary on Bonhoeffer (c/o Martin Doblmeier), add to the discussion aspects of Lifton and Fromm and add further, the important work of Hannah Arendt on the “banality of evil” as it relates to the human condition. Given human limitations -- including the inherent tendencies to sinfulness, especially on the collective level and spheres (cf. Reinhold Niebuhr) – the paper ends by posing several rhetorical questions, including Bonhoeffer’s.

**Vigorous Engagement: A wellness model for the whole person in social systems**

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Social conditions have physical health outcomes. Linking them is the brain. Recent developments in neuro-psychology permit us to construct more sophisticated models of how social conditions lead to health outcomes and feelings of well-being. One model suggests human beings have at least eight experiential channels of wellness which function in relation to physical conditions and social determinants. Seven of these channels are rooted in moral-emotional intuitions of social relations. These are hard-wired into the brain. The eighth is the sense of vitality that emerges from physical health. Cumulatively these eight create the energy and focus to positively engage the world. Together the eight produce coherence regarding the human conditions and guidelines for intervention strategies toward individual and collective well-being.

In particular, one experiential channel, the sense of transcendence is what defines an individual’s cosmology and frames their values and aspects of how they morally assess their relationships. This channel is missing in much Western thought about wellness and bringing it forward as a social and relational dynamic, as well as a personal commitment, does much to help people find the resources to move forward in their lives and seek change in the world.

**Problems in the Community: Social Psychological Foundations of Xenophobia and Xenoracism and a Practical Theological Response**

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Richard Osmer outlines four tasks of practical theology: the descriptive-empirical task, the interpretive task, the normative task, and the pragmatic task. Combined, these practical theological tasks can be understood as methods for analysis. In the context of the xenophobia and xenoracism against the religious other, “Why” is there animosity, ostracism, and bias towards the religious other? This paper will explore this question to create a “rich and thick” description of this phenomena. To this end, and since practical theology is interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and cross-disciplinary, this paper will utilize social psychology as an interpretive lens to uncover “why” derogation of the religious other occurs and “what” function(s) these behaviors play for the perpetrators. Terror management theory, intergroup processes, and defensive attributions will lay the foundation for exploration, creating a “rich and thick” description of the social psychological dynamics that contribute to xenophobia and xenoracism. Once these dynamics have been explored, a practical theological response, which incorporates community theology, will be constructed to address xenoracism and xenophobia.

**Making Room for the Religious Other: Leveraging and Nuancing Reasonable Accommodations in Canada**

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Religious Freedom is an important value in modern liberal democracies, including Canada, however, ensuring religious freedom presents serious challenges and difficulties for the governments of these nations. In his recent article, “Tentacles of the Leviathan? Nationalism, Islamophobia, and the Insufficiency-yet-Indispensability of Human Rights for Religious Freedom in Contemporary Europe,” Jason A. Springs challenges human rights as a foundation on which to build religious freedom. Despite his concerns about human rights, Springs believes that there is potential for corrective action that can make use of the positive functions of human rights and rights discourse. Using Spring’s analysis, I wish to suggest that similarly, reasonable accommodation is an “Insufficient-yet-Indispensable” tool for establishing religious freedom in Canada. Reasonable accommodations has been similarly criticized as being primarily a mechanism of state power and a means of defining and administrating religion in Canada. The notion of accommodation seems to immediately establish an unequal balance of power in which the the hegemonic majority gets to both define and accommodate the religious other. However, I wish to suggest that reasonable accommodation, rooted in open secularism and with a clear focus on obligation to the other could serve as a more effective foundation for religious freedom. Effective employment of reasonable accommodation, in service of religious freedom, can only happen through secularism. In this sense, it is necessary to understand secularism and its incarnations in the social imaginary. However, in an increasingly globalized world, and given the treatment of religion, and more specifically Islam, in media coverage, the nuances to Canadian understandings of secularism need to be openly discussed and communicated. I suggest, therefore, that secularism is foundational to both reasonable accommodation and religious freedom.

### **Study of Islam**

#### **“Territory is Not Map: Deterritorialisation, Mere Religion, and the Islamic State”**

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While the Islamic State (IS) has much in common with many other contemporary jihadist groups, this article argues that they express a distinctive attitude toward the taking, holding, and expanding of territory. Olivier Roy’s notion of the “deterritorialisation” of late-modern Muslim religiosity suggests that many Muslims, whether in minority or majority situations, perceive themselves as detached from “home” lands and cultures and, partly as a result, find Islam reduced from a holistic phenomenon to a truncated and compartmentalized “mere religion.” IS efforts to take territory can be seen in part as a rejection of such deterritorialisation. The IS version of a reinvigorated Islam is made possible solely by the possession of territory, and hinges on apocalyptic expectations about certain concrete locations and on the possibility of enacting a robust, hyper-aggressive form of Islamic law. This analysis helps explain some elements of IS activity and ideology, including their attacks on local cultures and their practices of sexual slavery, and also sheds light on why the movement may appear attractive to some Muslims.

#### **“The Discourse on Magic in 11<sup>th</sup> century Baghdad: Why was an Ash’ari Theologian so Opposed to Magicians?”**

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In this paper I examine the social implications of the accusations of magic and trickery in eleventh century Baghdad. In particular, I focus on the treatise by eleventh century Ash’ari theologian al-Bāqillānī, entitled Kitāb al-Bayān. The apparent goal of this work is a refutation of magic and the defense of prophetic miracles, where the author enumerates the types of magic and trickery on the one hand, and prophetic miracles on the other, offering detailed theological explanations of each.

Al-Bāqillānī’s exposition is informed by the larger context of Ash’ari theology in general, and of his own system in particular — featuring such themes as the idea of atomism and the acquisition of God’s acts. He dedicates several chapters to discussing prophetic miracles (mu’jizāt) — which are extraordinary actions that are accompanied with a claim to prophecy. Then follows a discussion of acts broadly classed

as “magical.” He classifies these into mere trickery (nīrajāt or sha’badha) and actual magic (siḥr). While dismissing the first as manipulation of people’s imagination, he accords siḥr a greater importance, defining it as a breach in the custom of the usual course of events.

A close reading of the text reveals that it was more than a theological exercise, however. While al-Bāqillānī’s explanation of magic and prophetic miracles leaves the impression that they represent essentially similar actions (a breach in the ordinary course of events), he is adamant that no magician may with impunity claim his actions to be proof of his prophecy — for a host of different reasons. Thus, al-Bāqillānī’s text bespeaks a deep concern with the possibility of mixing between prophetic miracles and certain types of magic. In other words, he seems wary of the fact that a number of people might come forward and falsely claim prophecy by performing extraordinary actions.

In my paper I will first offer a close analysis of Bāqillānī’s text and analyze his discourse. In order to understand his motives, I step back and offer a broader view of the social and cultural environment that might have caused al-Bāqillānī’s anxiety about the confusion between prophetic miracles and magic. My preliminary conclusion is that there was at his time an increased number of people who claimed to possess supernatural powers, and who used these claims to gain authority. Thus, to gain a deeper understanding of the social motives that might have prompted his attack on sorcery, I will examine the social and sectarian background of the individuals accused of magic during al-Bāqillānī’s time. For other than a work of theology, Kitāb al-Bayān is a deftly crafted defense of authority and orthodoxy, and al-Bāqillānī’s deployment of terms such as siḥr and sha’badha is a rhetorical tool that has deep social implications. No wonder that, while intolerant toward magicians from his own religious community, he gives a free pass to Christian and Jewish magicians: being outside of the fold of Islam, they posed no threat to the power structure where the author belonged.

### **Noah, The Builder: The Flood Hero in the Line of Fabricators**

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Noah is the biblical flood hero, and the fabrication of the life-saving vessel notwithstanding. This building aspect of Noah is suggestive when viewed alongside other manufacturers in the line of Cain (Gen 4\*), with their tools and instruments. The so-called ark (*tēbā*) of Noah can, moreover, be seen to prefigure the tabernacle, as a divinely blueprinted sanctuary, and, by extension, the temple. The ark as a utopic structure, amidst the dystopic events surrounding it, is portrayed most poignantly in the Priestly stratum, with P’s predilection for ideological and theological interpretations and assertions. The post/non-Priestly stratum augments the motif of the builder in Noah and Genesis generally. Further, the (composite) builder motif and the conclusion to the flood events, reveals a polemic against other ancient near Eastern temples as for example in *Enuma Elish* and the Baal Cycle; of importance, specifically, is the window as a predominant feature to the structure. One aim of the Genesis flood narrative, it is argued, is to portray Noah, retrospectively, as a temple builder, and the Deity as one who is not threatened by the chaotic and chthonic floodwaters after the defeat of the latter by the former—a marked contrast to the Levantine accounts.

### **Hebrew Bible**

#### **Mute and Mutilated: Understanding Judges 19-21 as a מַשַׁל of Dialogue**

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There is a story at the end of Judges that has been described as “depicting the horror of male power, brutality and triumphalism, of female helplessness, abuse and annihilation.”<sup>10</sup> Baker describes it as a “grisly metaphor.”<sup>11</sup> Buber coins it a “political declaration.”<sup>12</sup> Stone declares it a “scandalous narrative.”<sup>13</sup> There is no “organic” connection to the previous chapters.<sup>5</sup> It has been described as a *homeless* piece of literature in Judges.<sup>14</sup> Judges 19-21 has also been labeled a “fictional account” and a “comic resolution.”<sup>15</sup> In a more neutral vein, Judges 19-21<sup>16</sup> is described as “fragmentary” and basically an “appendix” or “appendage.” *The silence of the mute and mutilated concubine leaves the reader offended and often unable to thoughtfully engage these three chapters.* How can we speak about this awkward addendum, this abusive text? In this paper I will argue that we can move beyond trauma to speaking about this text if we read it as a profoundly intertextual example of the genre מִשְׁלַּל: a very pregnant Hebrew term. As מִשְׁלַּל, this story marks an integral chapter in Israel’s theologico-political story of becoming; its threshold of transition. The end is not *finalized*. Through genre, this מִשְׁלַּל (*proverb, parable*) of Judges 19-21 may find a place to call home.

### Lady Wisdom and the Threshing Floor: Reading Between the Sheets in Ruth 3:1-6

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This paper considers the intertextual relationship that obtains between the biblical books of Ruth and Proverbs, with special attention being given to the manner in which Naomi’s speech in Ruth 3:1-4 appropriates and subverts the vision of masculine wisdom constructed in the latter work. I begin by locating Proverbs’ portrayal of personified (and feminine) Wisdom and Folly in relation to the larger didactic macrostructure of masculine father-son instruction that undergirds chs. 1-9. To this end, I note that although both Wisdom and Folly are ostensibly feminine figures, these chapters, through the careful manipulation of speaking roles, encourage hearers/readers to identify the character of Lady Wisdom with the father figure himself; by contrast, the sexually promiscuous Folly, who alone of the pair is not permitted an autonomous voice of her own within the text, is construed by virtue of her lack of discursive independence as in opposition to the father and, therefore, as providing teachings that are necessarily illegitimate. Following from this initial discussion, I turn to an examination of Ruth 3:1-6, highlighting therein the inclusion of familial language that directly mimics the rhetoric of the father’s own speeches in Prov 1-9. Of specific interest in this regard is Naomi’s use of *bittî* (“my daughter”) when addressing her daughter-in-law Ruth, a lexical item that, inasmuch as it evokes the recurrent refrain of *b’ēnî* (“my son”) that marks the intended male hearer/reader of Prov 1-9, attunes perceptive hearers/readers to Ruth’s

<sup>10</sup> Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 65.

<sup>11</sup> Robin Baker, *Hollow Men Strange Women: Riddles, Codes and Otherness in the Book of Judges*, (Leiden: BRILL, 2016), 6. J.J. Collins called it a “grisly climax” in the *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2014).

<sup>12</sup> Martin Buber, *Kingship of God* (New York: Humanity Books, 1967), 77-78. Buber also highlights a misinterpretation in that “the act of unity at the beginning of the twentieth chapter in no way justifies the conception that what is involved here is a ‘churchly’ unity which was projected back from the post-exilic situation in the early period.” See also Footnote 52 on this section as the idea originates with J. Wellhausen, 82.

<sup>13</sup> Lawson Stone, “*Book of Judges*” in *Dictionary of the Old Testament Historical Books* (Illinois: IVP 2005), 602.

<sup>5</sup> DOTHB, 595

<sup>14</sup> There is “no agreement on the literary home of chapters 17-21.” Daniel Block, *Judges, Ruth* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1999), 56.

<sup>15</sup> Boling, Robert “In those Days there was no king in Israel” in *A Light Unto My Path: Old Testament Studies in Jacob M. Honor of Myers*, edited by Howard M. Bream, et al., 33-48. Gettysburg Theological Studies (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1974), 43.

<sup>16</sup> Judges 17-18 is part of the epilogue of Judges but the intentional anonymity and mute silence of the key figures in the narrative in Judges 19-21 reveals that this second epilogue is a unique genre in its own right.

implicit position as the recipient of authoritative instruction vis-à-vis Naomi's role as a sapiential teacher. In this manner, whereas Prov 1-9 attributes assertive female sexuality to the negative character of Folly, by presenting herself as a parental speaker whose discursive structure comports with the broader sapiential imaginary, Naomi assumes the literary position of Lady Wisdom herself; the effect being that Naomi's overtly erotic instructions to her daughter-in-law in Ruth 3:1-4 are infused with an intrinsic legitimacy that contrasts with the illegitimacy ascribed to such actions in Proverbs. Given both the climactic description of Ruth's obedience to Naomi's directives as an instance of covenant fidelity ("hesed") in v. 3:10 as well as YHWH's later blessing of Naomi with a child through Ruth in vv. 4:13-17, I contend that such a reading of Naomi's speech is confirmed by the literary and theological trajectory of the book as a whole. On the basis of this intertextual analysis, I am able to suggest that not only does Ruth 3:1-6 subvert the masculine rhetoric of Prov 1-9 through its construction of Naomi as an independent female source of instruction, but it further serves to establish a vision for the use of sexually transgressive behavior as a means of achieving redemptive ends.

### **Mapping Sinai: Corpus Linguistics and Biblical Law**

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While metaphor is often assumed to be the stuff of poetry, the field of cognitive linguistics opens up new avenues for tracing the shaping power of metaphor in other genres. Biblical scholars have drawn upon the insights of cognitive linguists for work in narrative and poetic texts (e.g., Andrea Weiss, *Figurative Language in Biblical Prose Narrative: Metaphor in the Book of Samuel*, VTSupp 107, Leiden: Brill Academic, 2006; Marc Zvi Brettler, *God is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor*, LHBOTS 76, New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2009; Job J. Jindo, *Biblical Metaphor Reconsidered: A Cognitive Approach to Poetic Prophecy in Jeremiah 1–24*, HSM, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), but very few have applied this methodology to biblical law (an exception is Joseph Lam, *Patterns of Sin in the Hebrew Bible: Metaphor, Culture, and the Making of a Religious Concept*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). This paper will offer a preliminary taxonomy for categories of conceptual metaphor as they appear in the Decalogue and the Covenant Code. Attention to these metaphorical concepts not only enhances our understanding of biblical instructional material; in some cases a law cannot be properly interpreted without reference to its metaphorical underpinnings. Several such examples will be highlighted, most significantly Exod 20:7, where the underlying metaphorical concept is usually overlooked. This command is directed to the Israelites as bearers of YHWH's name, selected from among the nations. They are not to "bear/carry his name in vain," that is, in a way unbecoming those who belong to YHWH. This alternative reading of Exod 20:7 is strengthened by the ubiquity of other conceptual metaphors present in biblical law and by linguistic evidence of this concept in other settings.

### **Social Aspects of Canonizing Literati in the early Second Temple Period: Exploring the Contributions of Some Potential Intersections and Dialogues between Research Frames Informed by Social-Memory and 'Bourdieuian' Approaches/Concepts**

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As per title, this paper explores what some intersections and dialogues between these research frames might contribute to the study of social aspects of the canonizing literati of the late Persian/Early Hellenist Period. Particular attention would be given to issues of 'cultural capital,' 'memory capital,' habitus, social mindscape, taste, grammars of preference, literatidicy (as a form of sociodicy), power, Temple controls and the possibility of effecting social change, and the related matter of social reproduction, and the implications of convergences between these research frames.

### **Between Two Worlds: The Functional and Symbolic Significance of the High Priestly Regalia**

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The detailed descriptions of the clothing prescribed for Aaron and his sons in Exodus 28 dwarf any other description of clothing in the Hebrew Bible. This paper assembles what can be known about these garments, comparing them with royal, priestly, and cultic garments of other ANE cultures, and considering the ritual occasion on which Aaron was first qualified to wear them as well as the ongoing rituals which he was thereby eligible to oversee. In so doing it draws on exegetical, archaeological, and ritual studies to demonstrate that Aaron's garments uniquely qualified him for his role as cultic intermediary between the Israelite nation and their God, YHWH. Aaron represented YHWH to Israel and Israel to YHWH, a reality elucidated by the design of his garments and the occasions on which he wore or did not wear them. The significance of the high priestly regalia thereby extended beyond Aaron's particular cultic duties and became constitutive of his role as representative of both parties.

#### **Apotropaic Accessories: Tassels and Phylacteries, Arm-bands and Veils**

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*Given that the adornments of garments are often just as significant, if not more so, than the garments themselves, this paper examines some ancient near Eastern accessories found in the Hebrew Bible. Of particular interest herein are the potential prophylactic and apotropaic properties of certain paraphernalia, and their cultural and religious role and import both in Israel and the Levant. The accessories investigated are the tassels (Num 15:37-41), phylacteries (Deut 6:4-9; 11:18-21), and arm-bands and veils (Ezek 13:17-23). It is argued these accoutrements did possess qualified apotropaic qualities in order to avert evil and thereby remain faithful to the covenant, albeit this takes multivalent expression in scripture.*

#### **The Emperor and His Clothing: David Robed and Unrobed before the Ark and Michal**

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The story of David dancing before the Ark as it enters Jerusalem has two distinct versions: one in 2 Samuel 6 and the other in 1 Chronicles 15. Second Samuel 6:14 states that David—wearing a “linen ephod” (some kind of priestly garment; cf. 1 Sam 2:18; 22:18)—“whirled with all his might” before the Ark. Michal despises David for this behavior (2 Sam 6:16), and she chastises him for it, claiming that he exposed himself “as one of the riffraff might expose himself” (2 Sam 6:20). Michal thus condemns David's dancing but also his *clothing* (or lack thereof). David seems to have dressed down for the party. In 1 Chr 15:27, however, David is “wrapped in robes of fine linen” in addition to his priestly ephod. The narrative in Chronicles, too, highlights Michal's distaste for David's whirling about (1 Chr 15:29), but it does *not* recount Michal's comments about indecent exposure. David's state of dress is a conspicuous difference in the versions, a difference which impacts potential readings of the narrative. Moreover, this is the only place in Chronicles where Michal makes an appearance—an issue commentators often puzzle over. In Samuel she is a key element in plot development, but in Chronicles she is simply mentioned off the cuff, so to speak. In the account of David's bringing the Ark into Jerusalem, then, we have an exemplary case study for examining both the import of clothing in Judean historiographical narrative and the discursive relationship between Samuel and Chronicles. In my paper, drawing on concepts of social memory and “forgetting,” I will argue that Judean readers of these texts partially warranted Michal's distaste for David's dressing down, and I hope also to demonstrate how such an approach gives us a better understanding of how these two historiographical texts (Samuel and Chronicles) functioned in their ancient Judean milieu.

#### **The Portrayal of Saul and His Clothes/Armor in 1 Samuel**

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One of the unique features of the book of 1 Samuel is a significant emphasis placed on clothing and the appearance of individuals. From the many references to Samuel's robe or Saul's (even David and Jonathan's) armor to the garments of Israel's priests, it is not difficult to see that clothing and appearance plays a role in the telling of these stories. Given all of this, I would like to explore the particular use and

function of Saul's clothing including his battle garments within 1 Samuel. In this paper I will show how Saul's appearance and particularly his clothing is an important means by which our author helps us as readers understand not only how he is portrayed, but furthermore why he is rejected so quickly as Israel's first king. The results of this analysis will also reveal a number of implications for wider discussions concerning the book of Samuel within the Deuteronomistic History.

**Were YHWH's Clothes Worth Remembering and Thinking About among the Literati of Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Judah/Yehud? Observations and Considerations**

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This paper addresses the fact there seems to be not much in the world of memory and imagination of these literati about YHWH's garments, compares this dis-preference with similar dis-preferences and explores potential reasons for it.

**Nakedness, Shame, and the Presence of God: an exegetical exploration of Genesis 2:25**

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Genesis 2:25 has been read throughout history with a sexual slant. The two main proponents of views are Irenaeus and Augustine. The former argues that 2:25 conveys a childlike innocence; that is, a prepubescent state. The argument continues that 3:7 is an awakening or new awareness of sexuality upon receiving knowledge of good and evil.<sup>17</sup>

The latter argues that in 2:25 the man and woman were naked and yet without shame because "they did not perceive in their members any law at war with the law of their mind."<sup>18</sup> The law was given after their transgression, which then caused a war between the law and their mind. Some say he is referring to a state of righteousness; it can be argued that he seems to be alluding to a sort of sexual freedom.

While both these renowned theologians' interpretations have been supported over the centuries, this paper has been pursued to see if 2:25 says something different. This paper's exploration of Genesis 2:25 argues the following thesis: In the presence of God man and woman lacked nothing and were able to fulfill their role as priests by honoring God, and in so doing received honor and stability as a gift from God in their position and standing before Him, hence *naked but not ashamed*. The paper will involve grammatical, lexical, historical, and biblical research, with a conclusion that considers the findings in light of the New Testament, albeit briefly.

**Why Not Drink from the Nile? Historical and Cultural Perspectives on Jeremianic Egyptophobia**

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During the sixth century BCE, Egypt provided asylum to Judaeans living under the domination of the Neo-Babylonian empire. The book of Jeremiah, however, rejects Egypt as a place of haven, condemns those who flee there, and forecasts Egypt's defeat by Nebuchadnezzar on African soil. Scholars have thoroughly considered the political debates between pro-Babylonian and pro-Egyptian factions in late monarchic

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<sup>17</sup> We see the argument best articulated in Bouteneff's statement: "And what Adam did—partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil—was something we are all meant to do anyway. Adam did it ahead of this time, in his God-endowed freedom and in childlike innocence. The pathos of human disobedience remains, but the primary blame rests with the devil (*AH*, 4.40.3; 3.23.3; *Dem.* 16), and the outcome is very much part of the divine plan for the human person's union with God." Peter. Bouteneff, *Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008), 84–85.

<sup>18</sup> Augustine: Found in John Hammond Taylor trans., *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, vol. 41-42, *Ancient Christian Writers* (New York, N.Y.: Newman Press, 1982), 135.

Judah, though no study has specifically addressed the literary and ideological repercussions of Judaeans anti-Egypt sentiment. Recent studies engaging Pohlmann's 1978 theory of a no-longer extant "exile edition" of Jeremiah account for rhetorical vitriol directed against Judaeans settled in Egypt, but the negativity towards Egypt itself remains unexplored.

This essay (1) correlates Egypt-ward antagonisms in Jeremiah with salient historical events from the late-seventh to mid-sixth centuries BCE (i.e., during the period of the 26th/Saite Dynasty) and (2) uncovers Egypt's symbolic role within the cultural/ideological matrix that is the book of Jeremiah. The literary tradition curated within Jeremiah partakes of a deuteronomistic theology according to which Jerusalem's fall to Babylonian forces resulted from Judah's covenant infidelity. In this theological interpretation of events, Nebuchadnezzar's campaign represents the execution of Yhwh's justice, and those who oppose the Mesopotamian empire oppose the rule of Yhwh himself. Egypt, as Babylon's imperial competitor and haven of Judaeans renegades, becomes in Jeremiah a country set against Yhwh. Jeremiah memorializes past and anticipates future Egyptian calamity, perhaps lest a prosperous Egypt destabilize the tradition's symbol-network and the political predictability it might have afforded ancient scribes.

### **Laying Methodological Foundations for Retelling a Story of YHWH: Cultural Translation and Subversive Reception through Israelite History**

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This paper explores some potential approaches to study the different expressions of YHWHism throughout Israelite history, while being aware of the complexities with such a task. By identifying common responses to historical pressures that changed expressions of divinity throughout Israelite history, while being attentive to how ancient Israelites expressed divinity within a broader cultural matrix, a broad study might identify how changes to divinity commonly occur over a larger data set, if guided by two lenses: *cultural translation* and *subversive reception*. The times when Israel translates expressions of divinity from other nations, is matched by a subversive reception of those ideas; ideas are expressed in a common matrix but at the same time are re-expressed to respond to external threats while solidifying Israelite identity. Analyzing already well-known textual, inscriptional, and material data for YHWH across a broad chronology, combined with isolating particular expressions in their most reasonable contexts and proposing the historical motivators behind them, and tracing their origins in other cultures through the lenses of *cultural translation* and *subversive reception*, each build the essential pieces for a historically informed systematic proposal of YHWH's story from its earliest expressions in 1200 BCE until the Persian period in 332 BCE. This paper focuses on how *cultural translation* and *subversive reception* might provide a helpful lens for identifying common changes in YHWH's divinity that takes account of comparative data in the ANE, simultaneously attending to changes in the expressions YHWH due to do historical circumstances, and isolates a few biblical texts to begin exploring these possibilities.

### **When Amarnites and Qedarites straddled the Red Sea: Understanding the Vedic Roots of Judaism**

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Amarnath and Kedarnath, separated by a distance of 300 miles, represent two immortal Shrines of Lord Shiva in India on the edge of the Himalayas. 3300 years ago, in Egypt King Amenhotep IV (Akhenathan) built the city of Amarna. The Amarna Letters show various correspondence between Tushratha, Mitanni king to Akhenathan, Pharaoh, and Tiye. and Queen of Egypt often filial and personal. Rig Veda 10:37 has parallels with Akhenathan's Psalms and poetry. On the other side of the Red Sea, in NorthWest Arabia, the "Princes of Kedar", the Children of Ishmael, ruled what Isaiah called "the splendor of Kedar".

Modern Scholarship looks to this time and wonders about how the Amarnites and Qedarites became early Monotheistic believers and evolved into the modern religious beliefs like Islam, Christianity and Judaism,



from the many city states with Henotheistic Pantheons. The Documentary Hypothesis postulates that the Jahwist brought Monotheism to the Bible from what were earlier polytheistic beliefs of the Pre-Jahwist. The morphing of Canaanite faith to one with One God under One United Nation with One Temple in Jerusalem has irrevocably changed World Religion. Yet, its earliest roots were polytheistic with “burnt offerings” and weapons named “YaagRishi”. It tells of Goddess Asherah, in whose image there arose the barren Sarah, an echo of the land where the Saraswati had dried. Even after Her Vinassana, or disappearance, She would give rise to another nation formed in the Image of Bharata.

### **Recovering the Symbolic Structure of Torah—A Tale of Two Paradigms**

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Just over fifty years ago Mary Douglas (1921-2007) challenged biblical scholars with her claim in *Purity and Danger* (1966) that the classification of clean and unclean animals in Lev. 11 and Deut. 14 indicated a highly ordered symbolic system informed Hebrew purity rules and biblical social organization. While at first Douglas expected the system to be easily deciphered, the more she learned about the Hebrew rules, the more they baffled her—frustrating her hierarchically biased cross-cultural expectations. Near the end of her professional life she reversed herself, asserting Hebrew purity was in fact an anomaly—it looked like a highly ordered and socially significant symbolic system, but it was not.

This paper identifies three obstacles that impeded Douglas and which continue to hinder scholars regarding her initial claim that a highly ordered symbolic system informs Torah and its rules. The first is an inadequate understanding of symbolic systems and symbolic structure as these relate to purity rules. Not all symbolic systems with related purity rules are hierarchical. The second obstacle is a tendency among scholars to view purity in relation to temple sanctity. Hebrew purity rules existed long before the advent of temples and have survived for millennia without them. Finally, the most tenacious impediment of all is paradigm blindness—we have failed to fully consider the influence of binary thinking in our reading of biblical texts. Although the premonarchic social and symbolic paradigm of Israel survived the transition to monarchy, it faltered when exile, end of monarchy, and temple destruction re-ordered public and domestic social relations. Even as written Torah preserved preexilic rules, rites, and texts, a binary paradigm emerged in response to social upheaval and compression. When viewed from the perspective of binary thinking, the classification of clean and unclean animals, once key to understanding preexilic social structure, became unintelligible—an essentially arbitrary yet divinely mandated and beneficial spiritual discipline.

### **Theology and Philosophy of Religion**

#### **Is Friendship Integral to Being Human? A Practical Theological Exploration**

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Is friendship integral or peripheral to what it means to be human? Anthropologist John Terrell argues that the capacity of human beings to make friends, even with strangers, is a defining characteristic of our species. Is he correct in considering this to be counter to the creation accounts of Genesis? Is this an area in which the Christian tradition needs correction?

Within this paper I affirm that friendship is indeed integral to being human. Friendship has shown itself to be a resilient relationship, despite being devalued, privatized and sentimentalized within contemporary society, with its emphasis on being an individual, and a consumer. Friendship has not been consistently valued within Christianity. While important thinkers within the Christian tradition have celebrated friendship, it has also been regarded with suspicion, neglected or ignored. Nevertheless, the valuing of friendship as integral to what it means to be human is consistent with the concern for relationality within the Judeo-Christian narrative, and with the *imago dei* motif found within the Scriptures and subsequent writings on friendship. Moreover, there is potential for a Christian metaphysical vision of friendship to

reveal the broader reality that envelops and informs friendships, and to bring correction to various gender-based preconceptions concerning this relationship.

### **Physician-Assisted Death from the Perspectives of Lutheran and Process Theologies**

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With the legalization of physician-assisted death in Canada in 2016, as well as in California in 2015, and Montana and Oregon in 2009 and 1994, Christians have struggled with the theological implications of these rulings. Since Augustine's critique of suicide as a sin stemming from a weak faith, there have been no theological developments examining "chosen death." Yet the situations eliciting the desire for physician-assisted death are vastly different from Augustine's context of raped virgins who desired death out of shame. A new theological approach must therefore be developed.

This paper explores a new approach to physician-assisted death from the perspectives of Lutheran theology and process theology. It begins with Luther's explanation to the First Commandment, "We are to fear, love, and trust only God," as a way to understand whether fear or trust motivates someone to choose death. It then turns to a Lutheran theology of baptism, which ushers Christians into lives of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, to explore how one's manner of dying demonstrates baptismal living.

The paper then proposes that process theology may offer us a new perspective on physician-assisted death. Process theology suggests that God exists in relationship with us, and grants us the freedom to be co-Creators of our world and life, so that we might, through decisions, successes, and mistakes, grow to be the mature individuals God has created us to be. In this freedom, God relates to us through kenosis and mutuality. Because God is in a mutually formative relationship with us, God thus sacrifices God's impassibility so that God might suffer when we suffer, rejoice when we rejoice, and thus truly share the embodied, enfleshed nature of our lives. In essence, God grants us full agency over our lives, so that we might become fully realized humans, as God has created us to be.

No process theologian has addressed the issue of suicide or physician-assisted-death, but there is room within the understanding of process theology to do so. This paper concludes with the suggestion that in giving us *full* agency in our lives, God gives us the privileges and responsibilities to make decisions about both our lives *and* our deaths. In this understanding, then, the choice to die is not a repudiation of God, or a sin as Augustine and Aquinas understand it, but rather a choice that God has already granted us to make. When a Christian makes this choice trusting and loving, rather than fearing, God, it can be understood as a Christian choice. When the choice is made in favour of one's own physician-assisted death, this, too, can be understood as a faithful and theologically supported decision.

### **George Grant's Moral Theology**

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In my paper, I explore the moral theology of the Canadian philosopher George Grant. I argue that Grant straddles the theoretical boundary between moral realism and subjectivism. His both/and approach to the realist/subjectivist debate avoids the shortcomings of both theoretical approaches. In my paper, I place Grant's theology in the context of the late-Medieval voluntarist critique of moral realism.

### **Language and the Lie in Classical Athens**

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Developing themes from my book *Socrates among the Corybantes* (1999), I discuss five Athenian thinkers and their views about the power of language. I show: 1) How the comedian Aristophanes heard more

“chatter” among Athenians than in previous generations and remembered silence nostalgically (“I rather miss those old silent days...”). 2) How the historian Thucydides found eloquence shaping events: war and peace, defeat and victory. 3) How the sophist Protagoras argued that reality, intrinsically vague, is shaped by the words we apply to it (“each one of us... a measure of what is and is not”). 4) How the sophist Euthydemus took up these perspectives in exhibitions of savage clowning (“There’s no such thing as doing wrong...”). 5) How Socrates, having debated with Euthydemus, retrieved in a new way the silence Aristophanes grieved for and recovered a taste for truth within the thickening fog of lies.

### **Thresholds of *Becoming*: Rahab, Bilbo and Mikhail Bakhtin**

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Ethnic identity stories are woven throughout the fabric of the Hebrew Bible, the pages of fiction and through the medium of film. Often it is through story where difficult and painful topics are allowed to speak into the private spheres of the heart. Just as George MacDonald’s, *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872), spoke through culture into the imagination and inspired later greats such as C.S. Lewis and C.K. Chesterton, so too does Bilbo the Hobbit<sup>19</sup>, the Canaanite woman, Rahab<sup>20</sup> and Mikhail Bakhtin.

Through marginalization and exile, each of these key persons in life and literature have risen to the forefront of their story. Each has endeavored over a threshold in their *becoming*. Each has the power to inspire hope through some of the darkest moments in their life narrative. We never grow tired of the underdog stories and it is often the marginalized who have the most truth to speak. Bakhtin’s “voice-ideas”<sup>21</sup> of dialogical contact widen the camera angle from the imagination to ethical initiative. It is through dialogue with the *other*, be it through person or text, where one is in the process of authoring and being authored in the process of *becoming*. This process for Bakhtin was never truly finalized in life.<sup>22</sup> In fact, his notion of the unfinalizability of the threshold in literature would indeed become a reality in his own life. This paper will weave these powerful mediums of story with Bakhtin’s metaphysical dialogism of answerability to show how each participant powerfully influences the *other* in this process of *becoming*.

### **Post-Traumatic Theology: Shelly Rambo and James Cone on Personal and Cultural Trauma**

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Shelly Rambo, in her recent book *Spirit and Trauma*, argues that doing theology through the lens of trauma enables theologians to re-narrate how we tell the story of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection to better articulate the “weary trickle of love” of the Spirit that remains with humanity even in the darkest of times. James Cone, in *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, similarly claims that in twenty-first century America the life and suffering of Jesus should not be understood without accounting for the ongoing generational trauma caused by the lynching of black bodies. Rambo and Cone, like other contextual and liberation theologians, challenge the starting point of traditional Western dogmatics because the lingering

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<sup>19</sup> J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit: Or There and Back Again* (N.Y.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996).

<sup>20</sup> Joshua 6

<sup>21</sup> Carol Newsom describes the important differences between “voice-idea” for Bakhtin and genre with an example from how Bakhtin illustrates through Dostoevsky’s novels the interplay of genre. Newsom highlights that this is an undeveloped area for Bakhtin in the area of interpretation. See Carol Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 175.

<sup>22</sup> This paper will show the dialogical contact between texts with Rahab and Achan; through characters in literature with Bilbo and Thorin; and through life events between Mikhail Bakhtin and the students who pulled him out of obscurity.

effects of trauma, especially generational trauma, is not accounted for in the very fiber of how Christian systematic theology is worked out as a whole. This paper will evaluate the opportunities and the weaknesses of doing theology through the lens of trauma. Trauma studies can be a gift to dogmatics but not at the cost of the central tenets of the Christian faith.

### **Atrocious Harms and Transmuted Goods: A New Reply to A New Problem of Evil**

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The atrocity paradigm poses a unique threat to theism: institutions of evil which perpetuate atrocious harms<sup>1</sup> demonstrate the need to rescue 'evil' away from theism, so that the human moral liability for such harms can be assessed.<sup>2</sup> An enduring ethical legacy of the atrocity paradigm surely will be its demand that humans are culpable for harms which threaten the ability to live a tolerable and decent life.<sup>3</sup> Whether the atrocity paradigm can succeed in its moral project-- to rethink evil and refocus its role in the human institutions which facilitate suffering-- depends upon two aspects of an atrocity: its systematicity and its transmutativity<sup>4</sup>. Atrocious harms result from systems of oppression that suppress human flourishing.<sup>5</sup> But atrocities irretrievably and negatively alter the sufferer.<sup>6</sup>

To date, theism is just beginning to respond to the atrocity paradigm, although some philosophers of religion have started to think about whether theodicy should account for concrete harms.<sup>7</sup> This paper argues that the moral project of the atrocity paradigm is threatened at least by its commitment to the transmutation of atrocious harm. Atrocities undermine the dignity of a person unalterably, and in a way that could never be justified by some later good. But, we can imagine a system of equal moral force, put into place by God but maintained by human action, which produces overriding goods that occur despite the presence of atrocity, and which the atrocity paradigm will not be able to explain.

"Transmuted goods" could transmute the sufferer to allow for a meaningful life-- whether the ability to have a future, to create possibilities for oneself, or to live virtuously. Transmuted goods share the characteristics of an atrocious harm: they could have been otherwise (since they are the products of human choice); humans are accountable for bringing them about; and they are ultimately praiseworthy (rather than blameworthy) since they non-negligibly benefit the person who experiences them (just as an atrocious harm non-negligibly alters the person who suffers it). That the transmutation occurs is itself a net positive, and the resulting transmuted goods can yield a life in which meaning (and, even, flourishing) can occur despite suffering.

How might a theory of transmuted goods alter the landscape for the atrocity paradigm's treatment of the problem of evil? For starters, transmuted goods free the theist to talk about whether God cares about concrete evil without having to justify every instance of evil. The moral math moves from weighing every evil with some (perhaps as-of-yet-unknown) good, to a one-to-one correspondence: morality contains a system of goods and a system of evils. Some of those goods are transformative, as are some of those evils. But, ultimately, we are culpable for what we do, and are called to eradicate atrocities. Our choices yield transmuted goods which alter the trajectory of a harm, and this presents a real difficulty to the atrocity paradigm-- the existence of such goods is evidence against the paradigm's contention that atrocious harms deprive a person from what is required to live a tolerable life, and so also undermines the paradigm's rejection of the theist response to the problem of evil.

### **What Does Kierkegaard Have to Say About Charles Taylor's Social Imaginaries as Pathways to Self-Understanding and Religious Belief?**

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This essay seeks to demonstrate that Charles Taylor's conception of "social imaginaries," otherwise known as plausibility structures, should not be viewed as pathways to self-understanding. Such understanding of selfhood underpins much of the current discussion on the narrativization of religious belief, particularly in Reformed circles. By articulating Taylor's reliance on Hegel's epistemological

project, I suggest that Kierkegaard's critiques against Hegel may similarly be used against Taylor's conception of sources of selfhood.

### **The Visible Christian Community: Suspended Between Memory and Hope**

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Christian community has become a central concept in some recent formulations of Church existence and ethics. A careful examination of community as both theory and practice suggests significant problems with these conceptualizations. Community is easily totalizing, and in the context of human psychological tendencies, can be the basis for violence and the elimination of the other. However, exploring the problems also suggests that a richer understanding of how community exists in the context of the visible symbols of Church life opens up the possibilities for Christian community in the positive terms imagined by its advocates. This symbolically reframed community is one that remembers its origins and looks forward in hope through the symbols (or sacraments) of churchly existence. Attending to the symbols of Baptism, Eucharist and Bible reframes community in such a way that its positive attributes are emphasized and its negative attributes are sidestepped or seen for what they are and opened for reconstruction. The result is that a Church that worships with the full resources of the Christian tradition is one that holds the best possibility for experiencing Christian community as divine blessing in the context of God's care for all humanity.

### **What is "On Earth As It Is In Heaven?"**

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In an earlier study of the Lord's Prayer, we argued that the petition generally considered the first petition of Jesus' prayer – "hallowed be Thy name," was not really a petition at all, but rather a doxological qualifier of the address, "Our Father who art in heaven." This claim dovetailed with the theological argument that "Thy Kingdom come" is the first actual petition, reflecting Jesus' focus on the coming Kingdom of God as the heart of his message. This paper critiques the increasingly popular notion of theologian NT Wright and others, namely that the phrase "on earth as it is in heaven" properly applies to "Thy Kingdom come" as well as to "Thy will be done." Typically this latter phrase is taken with "on earth as it is in heaven" as one petition, while "Thy Kingdom come" is normally viewed as a discreet petition. Wright's proposal is part of his larger argument for a more physical, this-worldly-analogous understanding of the heavenly Kingdom, in contrast to traditionally more ethereal, other-worldly views of that "new creation." We understand and appreciate these recent efforts to make heaven more relatable to Christians. However, our contention is that this revised interpretation of the early petitions of the Lord's Prayer does not comport with Jesus' own prioritizing of the coming Kingdom of God. Furthermore, this general project of Wright and others runs the danger of portraying the properly eschatological Kingdom as too physical and this-worldly to be supported by the biblical evidence.

### **Towards a Pastoral Theology of Trauma: Drawing from Lived and Practical Wisdom**

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Abstract: The history of pastoral care suggests that pastors are to be experts of "internal experience." For pastors who do not have formal clinical training, how can they be "experts" in clinical psychological and neurobiological domains of trauma? This paper draws from an African-American practical theology to construct a pastoral theology of trauma from lived and local experience. As Richard Osmer suggests, the practical theologian has four tasks, to discover "What is going on?", "What is going wrong?", "What should be going on?", and "What can be done?" Using this practical theological method, described by Osmer, African-American practical theology will create an entry point into lived and local theologies of care in order to construct a pastoral theology of care for trauma.

### **From Handmaid to Creator: Challenging Women's Evolving Roles in Scripture and Theatre**

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When the Virgin Mary agrees to be a handmaid of God and bear His child, she sets into motion not only a set of events that would affect political and cultural world hierarchies, but that would define - and one might argue confine - women's roles as passive in reproductive rights scenarios. Women playwrights, such as American Susan Glaspell in the twentieth century and Canadian Wendy Lill in the twenty-first century, sought to subvert this assigned role through dramas that reinsert and assert women as creators in representations of solitary reproduction.

In 1922, Glaspell took a decidedly activist approach with *The Verge* by merging science and gender issues in her representation of her protagonist, Claire, a woman scientist who wants to create a new plant species that can self-reproduce without the need for pollination. Glaspell stages Claire's obsessive biological experiments and her heroine's increasing social alienation as consequences of an oppressive society intent on preserving patriarchal control over the process of reproduction. Glaspell foregrounds the socially sanctioned curtailment of women's reproductive rights through Claire's refusal of traditional maternity, as embodied by cults of Madonna-like figures. Feminist scholar Elin Diamond asserts that Glaspell subverts motherhood when she cast Claire as a woman scientist who is a "creative woman who mothers plants, not American children" ("*This Garden is a Mess*" 126). Glaspell's Claire refuses to play the mother role in her own house, and instead transforms her domestic space into a laboratory for experiments in botanical hybridity setting herself up as a solitary creator figure.

While Glaspell's play was radical, and not well-received during its time, the first woman to win a Pulitzer prize for drama did lay the groundwork for women's revisioning of reproductive rights narratives. Building on this legacy, Canadian Wendy Lill's *Chimera* (2007) asks audiences to visualize women penetrating and occupying academic and political spaces, as scientists and producers of reproductive technologies. Lill's drama reiterates Anna Furse's argument on the impact of new biotechnologies. Furse contends that "no amount of spectacle, insight or wonder provided by technology and no amount of successful IVF statistics can detract from the fact that where the real power lies is not with the tools of such technologies themselves, but with those who control them" (165). Thus, these two women playwrights create a new scientific environment where women are no longer passive, helpless patients in gynecologist's or fertility doctor's offices or operating tables, but rather active creators of groundbreaking reproductive technology. By appropriating the language and knowledge of science, Glaspell's and Lill's women leap into laboratory and university settings to reappropriate the process of conception as a woman's milieu and field of expertise. By quoting scripture in the process, they challenge ingrained perceptions of women as handmaids and subservient to patriarchal order making spectators question their own preconceptions of women's roles in an increasingly scientific reproductive environment.

## **Women and Religion**

### **"Less Rational and More Emotional: Martin Luther's Theology of Women"**

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This paper examines Luther's theology concerning women, as well as, briefly discussing marriage, sexuality and the family. The first section of this paper will present Luther's theology before marriage (prior to 1525). The second section will present his later theological attitudes (after 1525). This paper highlights any significant theological changes or developments between Luther's earlier or later theological works. For example, an earlier Luther (prior to 1525) held a conservative understanding of women which scholars have found in his commentaries on Genesis that were written during this time. This understanding was derived from his interpretations of Eve and her role in the world. In the hierarchy that made up the universe before the fall, he held that women were inferior to men. This inferiority was based on the idea that women were less rational and more emotional. This was very similar to previous exegetical traditions, such as patristic and medieval exegesis, which argued that Eve's subordination was originally established by the created order. Years later (approximately 1530), the more mature Luther began to emphasize the equality of the sexes and began to remove the idea of Eve's subordination in the

original order of creation. The more mature Luther also argued that women's differences from men did not necessarily imply her domination by him, at least in a theoretical world. This paper will argue that Martin Luther's theology and social interactions with contemporary women demonstrates the complexity of his views as they likely evolved and developed throughout the years. Existing scholarship; however, has been slow to examine Luther's theology within a wider historical and social framework. What is more significant is that scholars have not deeply investigated Luther's theological views before and during his marriage in light of his behaviours and personal encounters with contemporary women, especially individuals other than his wife. No studies have determined whether Luther's social interactions with women actually reflect his own theological views. This is surprising because his complex understandings about women becomes much more elaborate than when one studies Luther's theology or theological attitudes alone. This paper provides a discussion of Luther's theological attitudes towards women in order to emphasize that future scholarship should address Luther's theology and social interactions from the dual perspective of theory and practice.

**“Religion and Gender Equality in Catholic Philippines: Discourses and Practices in the 21st Century”**

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Philippines is the only Asian country in the top 10 of the Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum), implying that the gap between women and men appears to have been reduced compared to developed countries in the West and other developing countries in the world. As the only Catholic-dominated country in Asia, the Philippines presents contradictions and contestations where the centrality of religion still pervades all aspects of social and political life, yet Filipino women's groups are considered the most active comparatively to other regions in the world. For instance, Philippines is the only country outside of the Vatican that does not grant divorce but there is an increasing number of female single-headed households today. Another is the democratization of governance where more women are elected at the local levels. This paper examines the particular discourses and practices in contemporary Philippine society based on ethnographic data in small communities in the Eastern Visayas regions, noting the dominant Catholic precepts on the role of women in society and the intersections of sociopolitical realities that help shape the unique dynamism among Filipino women to work for equality and social justice in different spheres—home, work, and community. It explores the dominant constructions of the ideal 'Maria' imbued with sublime virtues of passivity, humility, and morality and the other 'Magdalena' that transforms through the ages. In this backdrop, the Roman Catholic Church is analyzed in its contemporary pull in women's religiosity and constructs.

**“The Witch and the Healer: A Look at Women's spirituality as healers through 'the teachings of Dona Lupe.'”**

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It is 9:00 AM in a quiet alley in Fresno's downtown. The cold winter breeze does not deter the group of people lining up to see Dona Lupe, a healer of mind and body using her knowledge of magic, herbs and rituals to aid those who seek her. Not long ago, her work would have been condemned by organized religion. She would have faced the wrath of religious inquiries and perhaps death. Through her work and knowledge, Dona Lupe holds a tradition that has been familiar to women throughout history. Yet, to speak of Dona Lupe's work in an alley in downtown Fresno, one cannot overlook an historical synthesis that occurs each time she conjures up the angels and saints that can aid in her work. It is a reckoning of voices and stories that time has forgotten; or else has remembered only through narratives that speak of women as obscure figures, easily tempted or seduced by the dark arts.

In the work of scholars like Dr. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, whose research addresses, among other things, the recognition of a feminist theology in the early Christian church, the stories of women's spirituality emerge with poignancy. The contention between organized religion and women's experience as spiritual beings has been widely documented and, thankfully, has changed over time. Still, much remains to be said about the way women experience their own sense of spirituality, particularly outside

established religion. In my paper, I will present the story of Dona Lupe, both as a healer and as a witch. To the people who come and wait hours to see her, she is both. While she offers no promises to cure ailments afflicting those who seek her, be those emotional, physical or even spiritual, she performs rituals that seem to give people the experience of hope. Unlike other narratives that look at how people experience healing, this paper focuses on the healer--the witch--and how she experiences her world. I will argue that a new narrative is unfolding that needs to be captured. While the voices of women like Dona Lupe were silenced in the past, those voices remain, not as whispers, but as solid evidence that women's spirituality has been and will be an important vehicle for communing with the divine.

### **"Isis and Asherah – Ancient Mothers of Civilization"**

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*I am calling you, O Sarah, this is your sister, Hagar,  
calling through the centuries to reach you from afar.  
Here is my son Ishmael, your sister's son alive.  
We share the sons of Abraham, two peoples, one tribe.  
Yes, I am your Sarah, I remember you, Hagar.  
Your voice cuts through the distance, no, you can't be very far.  
It was I who cast you out, in fear and jealousy;  
Yet your vision survived the wilderness to reach your destiny.  
But it wasn't till my Isaac lay under the knife  
that I recognized your peril, the danger to your life.  
I tremble now, O Hagar, for our peril's still the same:  
We will not survive our danger till we speak each other's names.  
We must hear each other's prayers, sing each other's songs,  
and share the dream of one homeland for which our peoples long.  
~Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb*

This poem creatively illustrates the conflict of Sarah and Hagar that is described in the bible in the book of Genesis. Sarah casts Hagar, Abraham's second wife and her son Ishmael out into the wilderness because of conflict between Ishmael and her son Isaac (Genesis: 21 9-13). Ishmael becomes the father of the religion of Islam and Isaac becomes the father of the religion of Judaism. All practitioners of the religion of Judaism claim Abraham and Sarah as the beginning of their ancestral line and the lineage is led by Isaac. As the mothers of Ishmael and Isaac, Sarah and Hagar are the "mothers" of the traditions of Judaism and Islam, Just as Mary as the mother of Jesus is the "mother" of Christianity. The purpose of the poem is to bring us into conversation about the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. As peace activists from both sides of the conflict work towards understanding they remember the bond that Sarah and Hagar once shared and their dream that both their sons would have the freedom to achieve greatness. Although I am fascinated by the perspectives of these ancestral mother's as a Goddess worshiper I wonder about the perspectives of the Ancient Goddesses of Pre-history of these lands. Hagar, an Egyptian slave, carries the lineage of the religion of Islam, and her owner Sarah carries the lineage of the religion of Judaism. In honor of Hagar and Sarah I will explore the Archeomythology of Isis of Egypt and Asherah of Israel. I devote this paper to the ideal that studying the past can inform the future. I offer this work as a tribute to both religions, both cultures, their ancestors, and their ancient mothers, as a prayer for peace in Gaza and the Middle East.

### **"Wine, Women and the Witless King: An Imperial Leitmotif"**

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In the book of Esther, Dan 5, and Mark 6 there is an intriguing correlation between wine, women, and the witless king, such that it could be viewed as an imperial *leitmotif*. The woman in each case is either the queen or queen mum, wine is a device which both puts the king in a convivial disposition yet also is thereby exploited by it, and the king, consequently, appears witless in the decision or indecision that he makes. Particularly salient is the verbatim phrase “up to half my kingdom” in Mark 6:23 and Esth 5:3, 7:2 LXX, and its near equivalent in Dan 5—a pledge that is significant in the Old Testament contexts of the Babylonian and Persian empires, yet is flimsy in the New Testament, Palestinian setting. Further, the Markan appropriation of this imperial *leitmotif* yields ancillary complexity and innuendo. Through synchronic and diachronic methodologies, the interrelationship between these three texts and their common themes are developed. Additionally, the three aforesaid texts are interpreted through lens of feminist and postcolonial criticism to accentuate the toppling or crippling of empires by means of women exploiting an inebriated monarch for their own purposes which directly affect the colonized and colonizer.

### **“Think BIGGER: Phallocentrism and Biblical Invention at the Ark Encounter”**

Valarie Ziegler, DePauw University ([vziegler@depauw.edu](mailto:vziegler@depauw.edu))

I first “encountered” the Ark Encounter (Answers in Genesis’ newly opened companion park to its Creation Museum) by visiting its website. What does one say about a biblical theme park whose logo, “Think BIGGER,” is superimposed over a very long cigar-shaped boat headed straight for the viewer, with a companion announcement, “Welcome, Pastors and Wives!”?

Avoiding the obligatory reference to Freud, what I immediately thought was: well, what else should we expect from a famously patriarchal organization like Answers in Genesis? As its Creation Museum depicts Eve as subordinate to Adam, so the Ark Encounter celebrates the enormity of Noah’s accomplishments by trumpeting (without the slightest sense of irony) the museum’s size. Other claims to ginormity abound: not only is the Ark the biggest wooden structure of its kind in the world, but its exhibition on “Why the Bible Is True” is—appropriately—the biggest exhibition in the Ark. And the facility’s 1500 seat restaurant? Possibly “the largest” in the country.

In addition to considering its “bigger is better” theme, I will critique the Ark Encounter’s insistence that its exhibits depict literal interpretations of the Bible. Most observers, whether they love or hate the Ark (or the Creation Museum), nevertheless credit these theme parks with fidelity to the literal biblical text. Any AAR, ASOR, or SBL member who toured the Ark would be astonished at the fantastical claims that pass for biblical literalism. Among other things, the Ark Encounter informs us that as a younger man Noah worked in a port city, where he became an apprentice shipwright and married his master’s daughter. As a mature man, Noah owned a library, which ARK visitors may tour. Though the Bible does not record the names of Noah’s daughter-in-laws, the ARK does, and allows visitors to walk through their bedrooms. We also “learn” that Noah’s wife and their son Shem planned to selectively breed domestic animals after the Flood. Etc. All this biblical “literalism,” and we haven’t even discussed the adolescent dinosaurs who occupied cages aboard ship, according to the Ark Encounter.

Obviously there’s a lot going on here under the guise of biblical literalism. I will speak to the political, gender, and theological agendas. I will also explain the centrality of the Flood and the Tower of Babel stories to biblical literalists who defend young earth creationism. In addition to verbal analysis, I will show pictures of the Ark Encounter to give session attendees a sense of what it’s like to tour the facility.

### **“The Simultaneity of Care and Conflict: Developing a Womanist Pedagogy for Teaching Bible in a PWI”**

Angela N. Parker, The Seattle School of Theology & Psychology ([aparker@theseattleschool.edu](mailto:aparker@theseattleschool.edu))

The second time I had a student come to me angry and crying over a conflicted interpretation of a biblical passage that she deemed “natural” and I deemed “harmful” to a number of communities, I knew that I had to critically examine the presence of my womanist body, my womanist transformative spirit, and my womanist practical wisdom as elements of my own pedagogy when I teach New Testament texts. In an

age of #BlackLivesMatter and emerging Trumpism in the United States of America, students are coming to predominantly white institutions of higher learning with certain presuppositions and assumptions regarding communities of color and their role in the United States of America. Further, since I teach in a master's granting program that awards advanced degrees in both divinity, theology, and psychology, many students come with their preconceived notions of the authoritative and fixed nature of the biblical text. As a womanist scholar of the New Testament, my paper will address how I am developing a womanist pedagogy for teaching the bible in my predominantly white institution. Further, I address the simultaneity of care that I provide to my students even as they experience conflict regarding my role as a black woman in society. As I develop my womanist pedagogy for teaching the New Testament, I highlight how embodied knowledge, transformative spiritual experiences, and womanist practical wisdom influence my emerging critical and culturally responsive pedagogy as I teach New Testament texts.

### **"Dead Text Resurrected? Christian Reception of Ezekiel 16 and Feminist Theological Reconstruction"**

Chelsea Lamb, Ambrose University, Calgary, AB (clamb@my.ambrose.edu)

Early in the development of feminist critical method, Ricoeur's hermeneutics of suspicion was appropriated and reinterpreted by feminist critics. Suspicion, rather than being employed in critique of the interpreter, was turned against the text itself as a tool for unveiling patriarchal influence and propaganda. While this tool, when applied to biblical texts, has proven profoundly helpful for illuminating the dehumanizing aspects of these sacred stories, it has had the side-effect of deadening many biblical texts for use in Christian communities. Ricoeur, however, offered an alternative to the hermeneutics of suspicion: faith. Ricoeur argued that a "first faith," the radical opposite of suspicion, may emerge from criticism a "postcritical faith" that seeks a "second naïveté." That is, critique need not be the end goal of interpretation. Instead, faith that the text may speak a new word to its reader, can lead to critical appropriation. Utilizing the insights of Paul Ricoeur, I propose that dedication to troubling biblical texts (as opposed to rejection) is facilitated by an *a priori* experience of faith, rooted in tradition, that enlivens these texts and allows some readers to reach a post-critical faith and second naïveté. Such a position of faith both fosters a commitment to the text and allows for resurrected readings of its content. Taking Ezekiel 16 as a case study, I will present a two part reception history. Part one will consider how the text has been received in biblical commentary throughout history, beginning with the Church Fathers and concluding with early 21<sup>st</sup> century commentaries. These readers, when compared to feminist scholars, may represent what Ricoeur has called the perspective of "the first faith of the simple soul." In a sense, these scholars present pre-critical readings that either exist prior to or ignore the insights of feminist scholars. Exploring the historical interpretation of the text may then serve as a starting point for the second part of this reception history where I will consider how Ezekiel 16 has been received by feminist readers in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Comparing how the text is received by these two reading communities demonstrates how textual interpretation shifts when a hermeneutics of suspicion is applied. Finally, I will compare those feminist readers who remain distant from the text (or advocate for the abandonment of the text) with those who offer new ways of reading the text in order to affirm its role as canonical scripture. Thus, upon concluding a tour through the reception history of Ezekiel 16, we will have come full circle with Ricoeur and seen that those readers who seek to resurrect the passage for Christian communities draw on *a priori* theological commitments and faith experiences that allow them to come to a post-critical position of faith in order to seek fresh revelation from an otherwise terrorizing text—a "second naïveté."